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# JEANNETTE



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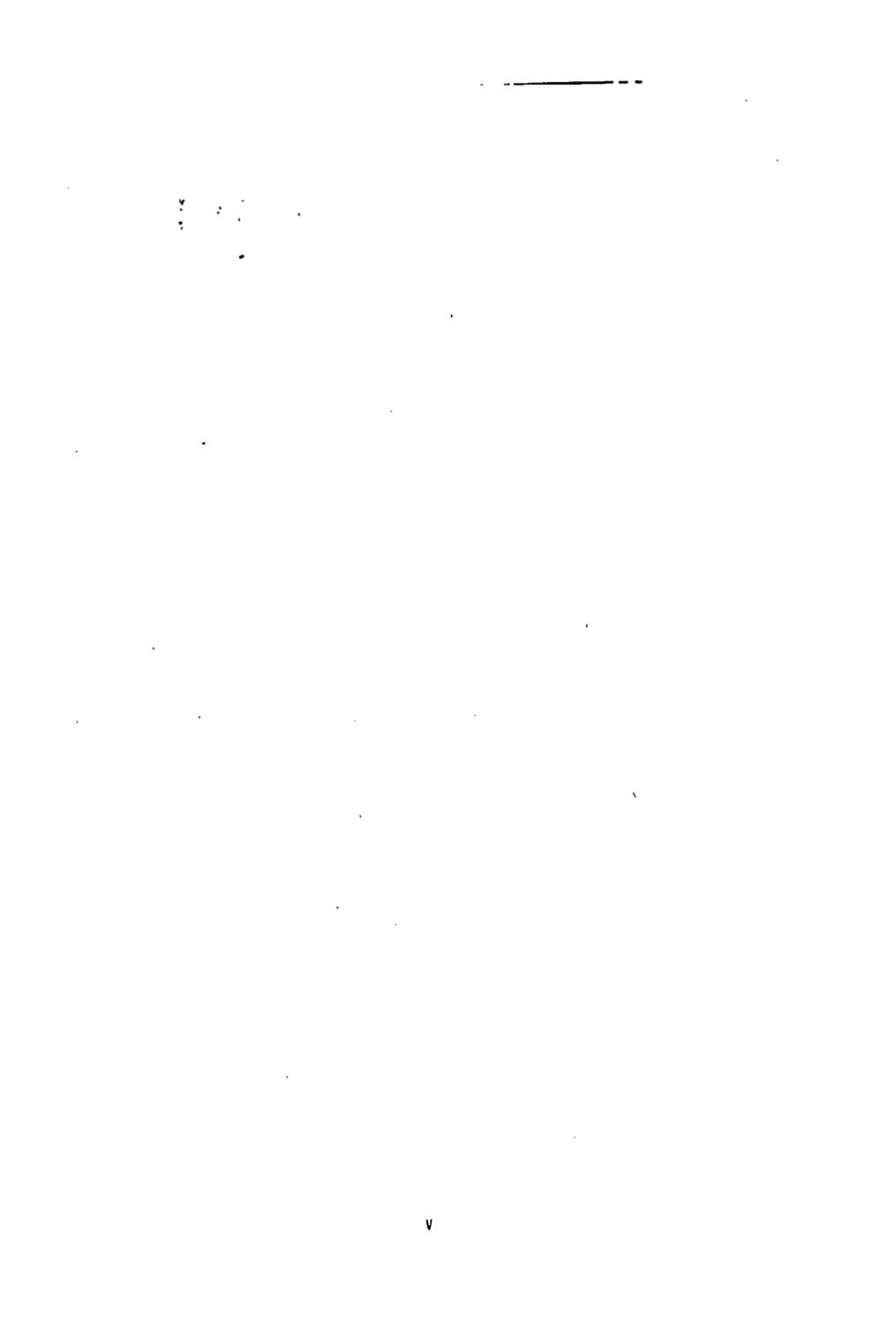


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"Good day, Père Janson, I have come to see you."—Page 19.





“ ‘Good day, Père Janson, I have come to see you.’ ”—Page 19.

# JEANNETTE

A STORY OF THE HUGUENOTS

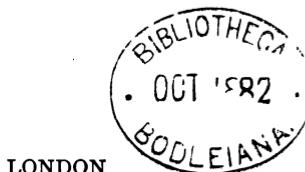
BY

FRANCES M. PEARD

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"THROUGH ROUGH WATERS," "MOTHER MOLLY," ETC.

*WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY F. A. FRASER*



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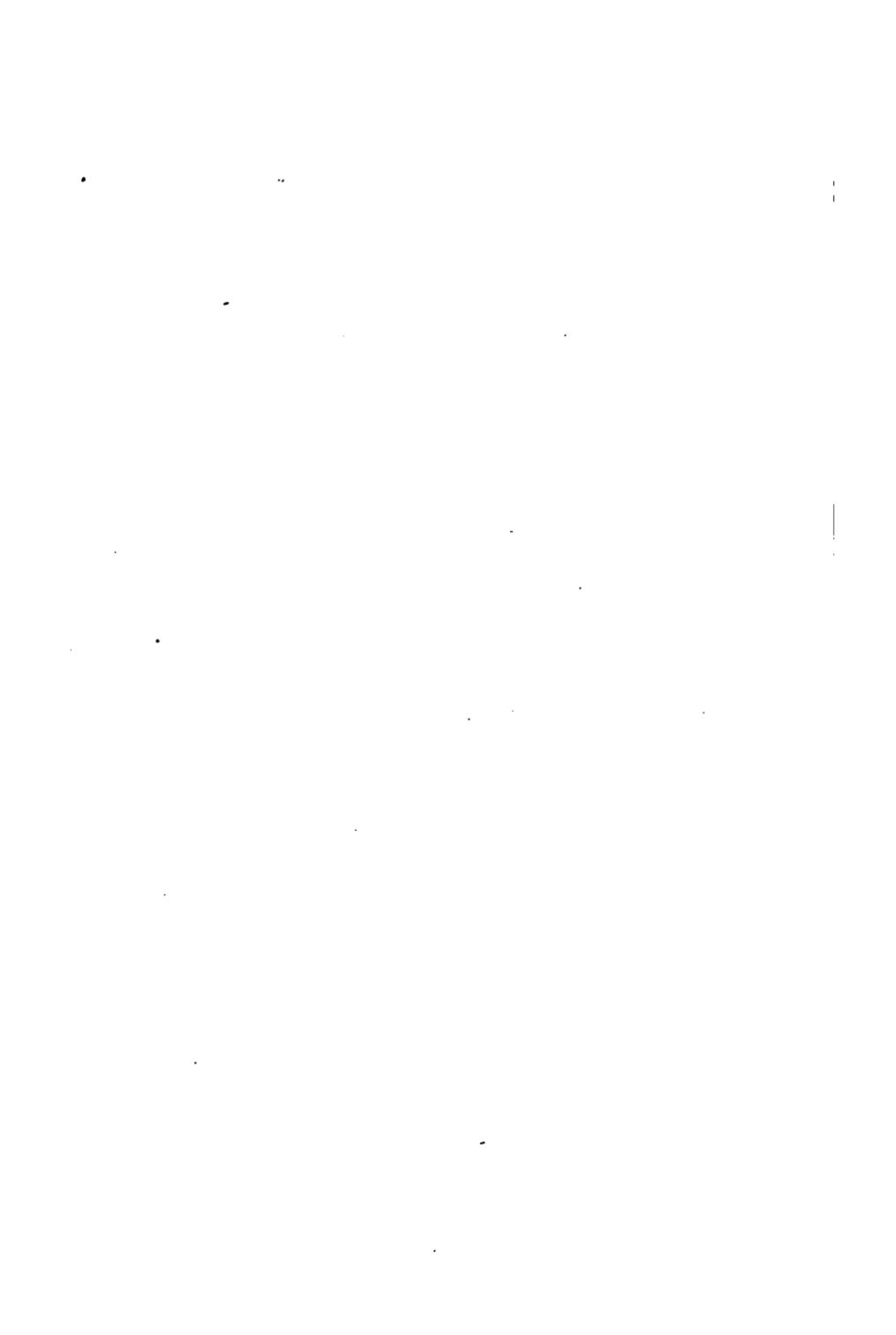
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TO

MY GODCHILDREN.



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Nos filles dans les monastères,  
Nos prisonniers dans les cachots,  
Nos martyrs dont le sang se répand à grands flots,  
Nos confesseurs sur les gallères,  
Nos malades persécutés,  
Nos mourants exposés à plus d'une furie,  
Nos morts trainés à la voirie,  
Te disent (ô Dieu !) nos calamités.

Ton corroux veut-il nous éteindre,  
Nous nous retirons dans Ton sein,  
De nous exterminer formes Tu le dessoin,  
Nous formons celuy de Te craindre,  
Malgré nos maux, malgré la mort,  
Nous bénirons les traits, que Ta main nous appreste,  
Ce sont les coups d'une tempête,  
Mais ils ramènent dans le port.—1698.

*Found in an old French Bible.*

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# JEANNETTE;

## A STORY OF THE HUGUENOTS.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### IN THE PASTOR'S GARDEN.

“I WANT Claude,” said a pitiable voice.

The old town of Caen in Normandy is a pleasant place in almost every season of the year, but perhaps most pleasant of all when the first delight of spring breaks out in its trees and flowers. For then the young leaves in their vivid green peep round picturesque buildings of delicate gray stone, and creepers clamber up, and there is a bright glad life abroad in earth and sky. And when my story begins, by somebody wanting Claude, though Caen was not nearly so old as it is now —when, in fact, you must shut your eyes, draw a deep breath, and open them again to find yourself popped back two hundred years, or thereabouts, in the world’s

history (it is not so long as it seems)—there was just the same pleasant contrast as there is now; the grey buildings did not look much younger, the streets were quite as cheerful, the river glistened as brightly, and, if there were not so many vessels moored at the quay, vessels there were, and plenty of bustle was going on about them.

But it was not in the streets or on the quay that Claude was wanted at this particular moment.

In one of these said streets there was a beautiful old timbered house, with a pointed roof and broad mulioned windows, and great projections throwing deep shadows. You went through a large square doorway into a paved passage, with doors on one side leading into the house, and, walking straight through the passage, found yourself in a garden where were some beautiful trees just bursting into leaf. And there—always supposing that you took this walk all those years ago—you would have seen a quaint, primly-dressed, pretty, frowning little girl, of seven or eight years old, standing with her finger in her mouth, and a very ill-used expression in her eyes, having just uttered these words—

“I want Claude !”

She was not alone, as might be guessed. Two or three older girls were round her, dressed in much the

same fashion as this little damsel, except that their frocks were made of coarser stuff, and two of them at least seemed to be devoting themselves to her especial amusement. When she repeated her words in a less piteous and more imperative tone, the eldest, a girl of about fourteen, knelt down before her on the gravel, and said, in a coaxing voice—

“Oh, Jeannette, be reasonable ! Thou knowest that our father has sent Claude on this journey of which we have told thee. How can he help it, and how can he be here when he is sent away ? He will be back to-morrow.”

“To-morrow is not to-day,” interrupted Jeannette.

“And we are quite ready to amuse thee,” continued Marie, evading this unanswerable objection.

“You do not amuse me at all ; you are all dull—*va !*” cried Jeannette the unreasonable, turning her back upon Marie with a wave of her hand, and a little shake of her shoulders ; “you may all go !”

And yet Marie did not deserve this unceremonious dismissal. She was a kind motherly-looking girl, with eyes that were dark and soft, and cheeks which, though colourless, did not look unhealthy. She was graver than seemed quite natural at her years, and the dark stuff and sober cut of her dress, unusual, especially at this time, in France, added to this apparent gravity ;

but that she was sweet-tempered was proved by the look of distress with which she turned to her sisters after Jeannette's repulse. She was evidently sorry for the child, and desirous that they should help to comfort her. One, a rather angular-looking girl of ten, made a hasty plunge forward, and caught little Jeanne by the arm :

"Never mind Claude," she said, in a high-pitched voice, "he is too big for thee, little one ! Come and play Colin Maillard ; and see here, if thou wilt, thou shalt be blinded first."

It was an unfortunate moment. Jeannette, who had arrived to spend the afternoon with her friends, was greatly disappointed and very sore at Claude's absence. Grande Barbe, as her father often laughingly called her, was full of good-natured impulses, but apt to ruffle Jeannette by the stormy way in which she carried them out ; and at this moment the ruffling proved serious, for Jeanne, in a pet, turned and pushed Barbe with all her might, and Barbe, who though big was loosely put together, and apt to tumble about, and meet with more serious misfortunes than her slighter sisters, tumbled now, catching her foot in some small projection, and ending a long backward stumble by falling against a tree, and lying stunned at its foot.

There was a cry of dismay from both Marie and

Clémentine. Marie rushed at once to Barbe, lifted her head, and tried to staunch the blood which it was seen was flowing from some cut: Clémentine ran as fast as her legs could carry her towards the house. As for Jeannette, the instant she realised what had happened, she stood as if turned into stone, staring with widely-opened eyes at poor Barbe's long helpless figure, at Marie's alert movements. But Marie was much too practical not to understand what should be done. She held out a handkerchief, and said in a quick, clear voice—

“Run, Jeannette, and dip this in the pond at the corner. It will stop the bleeding.”

By a great effort Jeanne forced herself to approach and take the handkerchief, not daring, however, to look more nearly at Barbe. By a still greater effort, when it was dipped, she ran back to the place which to her was full of horror, and from which she would gladly have hidden herself. What had she done? She remembered her *bonne*, Madelon, once shaking her head and saying, with a half indulgent smile, “Mademoiselle, some day you will kill somebody, if you have these furies.” Had she killed poor, kind, big Barbe? She would have gladly fled into some corner away from the sight which she dreaded, but in her hand hung the wet handkerchief, and whatever she might see,

this must be carried back to Marie, carried with all speed.

So full of terror was she when she reached the spot that she did not in the least realise that Barbe was sitting up, looking a rather ghastly object, it is true, as she leaned against the tree, with Marie's supporting arm round her waist, but still a real living and understanding Barbe. She even smiled at Jeannette as she hastily pushed the handkerchief into Marie's hand, but the smile was quite lost upon the child, whose mind was filled with horror, and who was conscious of nothing beyond the conviction that Barbe was lying there, and that she had killed her. At the moment she brought the handkerchief, and Marie said something she did not catch, steps were heard rapidly approaching.

Clémentine's flight into the house and incoherent exclamations had brought two persons, her mother and Dr. Maury, Jeannette's father, who had but just turned into the house for a little hasty talk with Madame Hamon, in case her husband was not to be found, on two subjects which engrossed him much—his little daughter, and the threatening gloom of the times. Into this conversation had burst Clémentine, breathless and pale, with the words, "Come, come! Jeannette has killed Barbe!" and as she could only repeat this sentence, father and mother hurried out in terror.

Dr. Maury reached the spot first, and, on catching sight of the group, stopped to call back to Madame Hamon, "Reassure yourself, madame, things are not so bad." The next moment he was by Barbe's side, and examining her hurts with skilful tenderness.

All the family were used to Barbe's misfortunes. It is impossible to say how many narrow escapes had been hers: she had set herself on fire, fallen into the river, slipped on the ice, swallowed plum-stones, and altogether gone through a whole circle of adventures. Nevertheless the Hamons were a tender-hearted race, and the long series had not hardened them into indifference; besides which, the cut and the bleeding gave this last rather an alarming appearance. Madame Hamon therefore hung with deep anxiety over her child, resting her hand on Marie's shoulder, and trembling. She drew a long breath of relief when Dr. Maury looked up and said, cheerfully—

"A little more water, if you please, and then we shall do very well."

Madame Hamon was herself again, collected and helpful. She stood upright and said to Marie in a quiet voice—

"Run, my child, to fetch what is needful, and lose no time."

Marie, accustomed always to implicit obedience,

hurried away without a word. No one thought of little Jeanne, except Clémentine, who had come back and stood at a little distance watching. The water was quickly brought. Dr. Maury, with a firm gentle hand, washed the wound, plastered, and bound it up. It was one of Barbe's narrow escapes again—a little further in one direction and it might not have been an escape at all; as it was, though she was feeling a little sick and faint, there was no real harm done, and when Marie had brought a seat, and Dr. Maury had lifted her into it, the soft fresh breeze which was stirring the trees very quickly revived her.

It was indeed a peaceful and pretty garden to be set in the midst of a town. Not shut out from houses, for plenty of pointed roofs like their own rose against the sky of deep and tender blue, across which small bright clouds were moving gently. So glossy were the young leaves just uncurling from their sheaths, that they shone and glittered as if a shower had just bathed them; so slender and budding as yet that they hid nothing of the beautiful dark intricate branches from which they sprang. Above the roofs in one direction rose the graceful spire of S. Pierre, and, as it happened to be a fête day, a clang of bells from different churches, from William the Conqueror's Abbey on the one side, and his Queen Matilda's on the other, every

now and then rang out in varying tones. Dr. Maury, standing upright and stretching his long frame, looked round him and said, half involuntarily, to Madame Hamon—

“A pleasant home, truly, this of yours. Pleasant and peaceful.”

She answered him by a mute gesture, which had in it something of protest, and which apparently he understood.

“Nay, dear madame,” he said gravely; “take what is given while it is given. Though, to be sure, the peace seems to have been already disturbed to-day. What was it that your Clémentine told us? Is it possible that my little spoilt one *was* the aggressor? We must hold a court of inquiry.”

Generous Barbe could not restrain herself, though to interrupt, or to speak without questioning, was, in those days, a breach of manners.

“Monsieur, it was an accident. I fell,” she said, eagerly.

“Hush, Barbe,” Madame Hamon said, gravely. “Marie, let us hear what happened.”

Clémentine, who had hoped to be questioned, drew back disappointed; Marie looked distressed.

“It was almost all an accident, *ma mère*,” she said, in a low voice. “Jeannette gave Barbe a little push, but

she could not have thought of hurting her, only unfortunately Barbe caught her foot in that root of a tree which projects, and fell and struck her head."

"Oh, Jeanne, Jeanne!" said Dr. Maury, looking round. But no Jeannette was in sight. "She has hidden herself, the naughty little one," he said, shaking his head, with a half-smile in his blue eyes. "She is ashamed, and no wonder."

"Is that, then, what you meant, Clémentine?" asked the mother, turning to her third child, a girl younger than Marie and older than Barbe, with a curiously set face and marked features. She now spoke eagerly—

"*Maman*, it was a hard, hard push. Jeanne was very angry with us all, for nothing, only because Claude was not here; and when she is angry she does not care what she does. Barbe would not have fallen if it had not been for that."

"Enough, Clémentine," said her mother in a displeased tone. "Jeanne is but a little girl. Where is she now, Marie?"

But no one knew. Marie had thought she was close at hand. Clémentine had noticed her absence when she came back, and believed she had run away because she was afraid. There could be no doubt that she had hidden somewhere.

"But it is remorse, not fear," said Dr. Maury in a low voice to Madame Hamon.

Barbe heard the words without quite understanding them; the other girls went in different directions to look for Jeannette. There was no real cause for anxiety about her, and Madame Hamon and Dr. Maury strolled up and down under the budding trees, with the pretty changing sky overhead, with pigeons flying backwards and forwards from the gables of the old houses, or nestling up against their timbers, with lilac bushes scenting the air, and the brightness of spring everywhere, except in the hearts of the Huguenots, who had for their king, Louis XIV., and saw before them a heavy bank of clouds full of stormy threatening.

## CHAPTER II.

## THE COBBLER'S STALL.

NEVERTHELESS, the first words spoken by the two friends had nothing to do with the troubles of their country.

"My poor little Jeanne!" said Dr. Maury, with a sigh.

Madame Hamon tried to comfort him by repeating what she had already remarked—

"She is very young," she said, gently.

"Other children, no older, are better disciplined," he replied. "You, yourself, dear madame, know that well when you think of your own. There is a more just excuse to be made for her, and it is one which I trust you often make in your heart—she has no mother."

"As to that," said Madame Hamon, with warmth, "if I think of it, it is to remember also that you have been father and mother both; that your tenderness, your patience, have never failed——"

"But my judgment often," he said, interrupting her, with a smile. "I have been afraid of harshness with my little motherless Jeanne. I have never forgotten her mother's last words, and I know as well as if all

Caen drove the fact down my throat, that I have fallen into the opposite extreme."

"She is full of generous impulses," urged Madame Hamon.

"She is full of impulses of all kinds," replied Dr. Maury, "and they govern her. There is the fear. Her impetuous, variable temper alone can shake her like a reed."

"Certain things in her, however, remain unshaken," said his friend. "Her love for you, for some of us, not all, I must own," she added, with a smile, "is rooted firmly beyond the reach of impulse. I have never known her tell anything approaching to the nature of an untruth. Marie and Barbe are devoted to her."

"That is one of her dangers," said Dr. Maury; but there was a tender light in his eyes as he spoke. "She can charm, and then she contrives to rule. Do you not know that in their play Jeannette is always queen—director? Only Claude ever opposes her."

"And she is fonder of Claude than of all! But you have reason in what you say. And, alas, does not my own heart repeat it, every word, for Claude? Our bright, handsome Claude! Think, monsieur, only think, what fears we experience, his father and I, every day. Think at this moment, when he is absent, whether I have one moment's rest. He too is so

impetuous, so high-spirited, so rash ! If he sees wrong, he must needs strike at it ; and, in these days, when wrong is everywhere—in these days when we must crouch, hide ourselves, live trembling, can you conceive what it is to have one so dear to you keeping you in perpetual terror by a rashness which may prove his death-warrant ! ”

Madame Hamon was weeping ; it was the doctor’s turn to turn comforter.

“ Claude will learn prudence, dear madame.”

“ It is possible,” she said, a little bitterly. “ But who knows at what cost ? And yet, God forgive me,” she went on, looking up at the soft sky over her head, “ how soon I forget my husband’s teachings ! So far we have been kept—we should not look forward. And, as you say, does it not look peaceful ? Who can imagine man’s fury turning it all to desolation ? Yet the accounts from the south, all agree, are bad.”

“ Perhaps exaggerated,” said Dr. Maury, looking at her with compassion.

But she shook her head.

“ Do not think, because I am weak, that I am not ready to face danger. And never hide it from me, I beseech you. We shall want all our preparation. The dragonnades, as I understand, are in full force in Bearn ? ”

"They are. The dragoons, quartered on our poor people, use the most barbarous measures; there have been terrible scenes. Why should I harrow you by repeating them?"

"Nay, my friend, permit me to hear."

"It is not only plunder, but torture. Sometimes they have left all and have fled, leaving all to their persecutors. In vain; they have been brought back, treated like dogs, compelled to house and feed the soldiers, forced into Roman Catholic churches, terrified by threats of death into abjuring their religion."

"And they have done so?" asked Madame Hamon, anxiously.

"Alas, in numbers."

They had walked slowly up and down while speaking. At this moment they had again come close to Barbe's chair. The little girl, exhausted by loss of blood and soothed by the soft breeze, had fallen asleep; her breath came and went peacefully; a tiny lock of brown hair had escaped from its covering. The mother stood still and looked at her with a heart swelling with anguish. Day by day, the shadow of coming evil seemed to grow darker and more gloomy. She turned to the doctor and pointed to her child.

"Ah, it is there that they can strike the hardest," she said. "Alas, I dare not be the one to judge those

poor creatures who have fallen away. For myself, I sometimes imagine I could bear the worst, but to see those one loves most dearly suffer, to have them snatched from one—Oh, may our Father in heaven show the mercy which men seem to have almost lost, and spare us this trial!"

At this moment Marie and Clémentine Hamon came hastily back.

"Where is Jeannette, then?" asked Dr. Maury, seeing they were still alone.

"Monsieur," said Marie, with a little hesitation, "we cannot find her. We have looked everywhere, but certainly she is not in the garden, nor in the house."

Dr. Maury smiled. He was not so uneasy as Marie.

"Has no one seen her?" he inquired.

"Monsieur, Toinette saw her running round on that side," and the girl pointed towards the thicket of lilac-bushes, "towards the house, and there we expected to find her, but we have searched every room and all the great presses——"

"And the oak coffer," put in her sister.

"And she is nowhere," ended Marie, looking anxiously in the doctor's face. He had changed countenance a little.

"She has run home, conscience-stricken, the little puss!" he said, turning to Madame Hamon. "It had

not entered my head that she would venture through the streets alone."

"And in these times!" said she, involuntarily. "But no one would harm your child."

Dr. Maury was bending over the still sleeping Barbe.

"Let her go early to rest and avoid excitement, and all will go well," he said, lifting his head and speaking quickly. "And forgive my naughty Jeannette. But I need not ask you; farewell, farewell, dear madame."

And raising his three-cornered hat, he was gone before Marie and Clémentine had finished their curtsies.

Marie had been quite right in the report she brought of the fugitive. Hearing steps approaching, not aware that her father was so near, but dimly conscious that now Marie would have help and did not need her, Jeannette fled from beholding the results of her own acts. She ran round behind the trees, skirted the lilac-bushes, and was out in the streets without being stopped by any one. She knew her way perfectly, of course, to her own home, and, though she had never pursued it alone, felt neither fear nor hesitation in the new circumstances. On the contrary, horror-struck as she had been by the sight of Barbe's white face, all the cheerful sights and sounds, the people passing from the market, the great white Norman horses, with their enormous collars, their peaked saddles and woollen trappings,

the chair-menders sitting in the road, the great barrels trundled along, all these were welcome to her, although she did not know it, because they helped to turn her thoughts from a remembrance which was hateful.

She went steadily along through several narrow streets, crooked, and, if the truth must be told, exceedingly dirty, and was very near her home, when it came into her mind that as Madelon did not expect her there, and was in the midst of a great sorting of linen, which Jeannette disliked, she would turn off and pay a visit to old Janson, instead of at once returning. Old Janson was another of Jeannette's slaves. He was Madelon's uncle, and came every day to assist in the household work in the *place* where Dr. Maury lived, but his actual trade was that of a cobbler, and his home was an odd little projection of a shop sticking out from the walls of a narrow side street. Stone steps led up to it, a great open square, unplanked, and of course unglazed, served as window; Père Janson ranged his boots and shoes upon its ledge, generally had a flower growing in a pot among them, and from nails driven in above hung his few onions, his precious garlic, or his chain of peascods in curious festoons.

Up the stone steps, one at a time, for they were steep and rugged, Jeannette clambered, greatly to the amazement of Père Janson, who was sitting cross-legged

and humming to himself a psalm-tune with which the little girl was very familiar. Jeannette had been there before, but never alone, and the old man momentarily expected to see Madelon's rosy face appear behind the young lady. But he looked in vain. Jeanne carefully closed the door behind her, sat down on a box, rested her chin on her two hands, and then said in an odd and rather troubled tone—

“Good day, Père Janson. I have come to see you.”

“Good day, mademoiselle,” said the old man, lost in wonder. “Is Madelon outside?”

“She is at home and busy,” said Jeannette, desirous to dismiss the subject.

“And monsieur the doctor? You are not alone, mademoiselle?”

“You can take me home by-and-by,” said Jeanne impatiently. “I want to ask you something.”

“Madelon can deny her nothing,” Père Janson said to himself, shaking his head as he stared at the little figure which, trim and dainty to the smallest details of its dark and sober dress, had perched itself upon the edge of his box, and looked steadily at him with grave questioning. “'Tis but a little way, but she should not have allowed her to come by herself. And in these times!”

"I want to ask you something," repeated Jeanne.  
"Do you hear?"

"Yes, my little demoiselle, I hear. I was only wondering."

He took up his boot again and began stitching away. As for denying Jeannette he was no better than Madelon, who indeed made a greater show of resistance.

"Père Janson, did you ever kill anybody?"

The old cobbler dropped his boot, held up his hands, and stared open-mouthed at his questioner. Jeannette sat still in the same thoughtful position, her chin resting on her hands.

"Heaven forbid, mademoiselle!"

"But you might, you know," she said, unmoved.  
"I have."

"You, mademoiselle!"

The contrast between the little figure, with its tiny and fairy-like proportions, and the exceeding gravity of this announcement was so great that Janson began to chuckle, greatly to Jeannette's indignation. She folded her hands on her knees and sat upright, darting an angry look at the old cobbler.

"You should believe people when they speak to you; and it is very impolite of you to laugh, Père Janson," she said, loftily. "What is the good of

my coming here to consult you, if that is all you can do?"

"Pardon me, mademoiselle," said the cobbler, struggling to regain his gravity; "you must understand that it is such a strange thing for a little lady like yourself—because, see here, you are not very big as yet—to come and tell me, that you will excuse me for thinking you have made some mistake. How is it possible for you to have killed anybody?"

"Yes," said Jeannette, appeased and sighing: "I dare say you cannot understand it. You know I did not mean to do it. But if you can, will you tell me, please, what is done to the wicked people who kill others? Do you think they will take me away from my father?"

Whatever had happened, and old Janson was in a state of complete bewilderment, it was evident that the question was one of exceeding gravity to Jeannette. There was no sign of playfulness in the blue eyes which looked steadily and inquiringly in the cobbler's face. Plainly some trouble was weighing on the little heart, and the old man began to grow uneasy. Besides, how came the child here in this strange fashion, she who was at least as carefully watched and tended as any child in Caen? And in those days the slightest mischance might prove serious.

Jeannette saw the change in his face, and drew a long breath.

"My little demoiselle," said he, anxiously, "you must tell me what has happened. Is it some accident?"

"I have pushed down poor Grande Barbe,—so," said Jeannette, extending her small arms, "and it has killed her!"

And then, suddenly breaking down, she rushed to old Janson, buried her face on his shoulders, and burst into a flood of tears.

The cobbler's first sensation was relief.

"Thank Heaven it is one of us," he said to himself. "In these days even a child's act might set the straw on fire;" and then he addressed himself to the work of consolation. He took the child on his knee, and held her tenderly against his arm. "Eh, eh, but that was naughty indeed; poor Mademoiselle Barbe, who would never do you any harm! But perhaps things are not so bad; perhaps monsieur the doctor will cure her; perhaps it was only a tumble——"

"She was killed," said Jeannette, resolutely, still keeping her face buried. "She was lying white, as white—see here, Père Janson,—as white as my petticoat," and a little hand stole out and lifted an inch or two of the long stuff frock.

"After that!" said the cobbler, smiling secretly, but yet

puzzled. "But where did all this sad affair happen, Mademoiselle Jeanne ?"

"Listen then," said the young lady, sitting upright and brushing away the tears from her eyes; "it was in their garden."

"The pastor's ? Yes."

"Madelon had taken me there to be with my companions. And Claude—Claude had promised he would be at home."

"Monsieur Claude. Precisely."

"And he was gone away !" said Jeannette, flashing an appeal for sympathy upon Janson. "He was gone, he had broken his promise ! You know, Père Janson, people ought never to break their promises."

"Oh, I comprehend all that perfectly, mademoiselle. And this put you out of temper ?"

"It afflicted me. Yes, perhaps it enraged me," said Jeanne, nodding her head, after a moment's reflection.

"And then ?"

"And then Grande Barbe said something, and caught hold of me, and I did not want her, and I pushed her hard, hard, like that," she said, speaking very rapidly, and pressing her little hands with all her force against his leathern apron; "and it was just as I told you; and then—then I did not like to see her or think about

it, and I was coming home when I thought perhaps you might know what I ought to do."

"You have come by yourself from M. Hamon's?"

"Yes, Père Janson; all quite, quite by myself."

The old cobbler set her down by his side very gently, opened a cupboard and took out his hat. Then he hastily removed his little stock of boots and shoes from the window-sill. All the time he was talking to himself. "Old fool that I was to have rested content! If she has been missed they will all be in a terrible state. I will take her home to that silly Madelon, who, I dare say, is never troubling her head by thinking about the precious jewel; and then I will go to the pastor's. It is a mercy her father does not know!"

Jeannette watched all these proceedings with serious sadness. When Janson had taken her little hand in his, led her out on the steps, and locked his door behind him, she put her question.

"Are you going to take me to the people who will punish me for killing Barbe?"

"No, no, my dear little lady!" cried the old cobbler, in consternation at the idea. "I am going to take you to Madelon, who should look better after you. Killing Mademoiselle Barbe, indeed! It takes more to kill people. Depend upon it, Mademoiselle Barbe is at this moment running round the garden, and wondering

where you have hid yourself. All that way by yourself ! Never, never do such a naughty thing again, if you love old Janson."

He hurried her along so rapidly, that Jeannette had no breath left with which to re-affirm her assurances of the tragedy, which were, nevertheless, unshaken. As they turned the corner of the street into the quiet *place* where stood the doctor's house, a man came upon them, pale with some great shock, and hastening with swift steps towards the town.

" Father ! " cried little Jeanne.

And then he caught her in his arms.

## CHAPTER III.

1685.

“ OH, my child, my child ! ” cried Dr. Maury ; “ what terror thou hast caused ! ”

He had her fast in his arms ; he was kissing eyes, brow, cheek, as a woman might have done. The colour had not yet begun to come back to his face. Jeannette put up her hand and smoothed his cheeks with a little caressing gesture, but with the gravity of the past hour still resting in her eyes. In a few minutes, Dr. Maury, recovering himself a little, turned to Janson.

“ Where did you find her, my friend ? Oh, the naughty truant ! Kisses are the last things she should have by rights. To have frightened her poor father thus ! ”

“ Monsieur,” said the old cobbler, with his eyes full of tears, “ she has been sitting in my stall for the last fifteen minutes or more, and I, fool that I was, thought she had only come this little way. When I found out the truth, I brought her away at once, and hoped monsieur had not missed her.”

Dr. Maury might scarcely have heard the words.

The reaction from the anguish of that moment when he had reached his home and found no Jeannette, and remembered the many children who had already been forcibly carried off from their Huguenot parents, in order to be brought up in the State religion, was so great, that he could do little but look at her. Old Janson had his senses better about him.

“Take care, monsieur,” he whispered quickly; “here is one who is no friend.”

A man, indeed, was close by them, who looked curiously at the little scene; a man still young, with a keen mocking face, and a dress far richer in all its appointments than that worn by Dr. Maury. His long waistcoat was finely embroidered, so was the lappel of his coat. He lifted his hat, and made a sweeping bow as he approached.

“Your little daughter, without doubt,” he said; “and from this touching scene, I may conclude, Monsieur le docteur, that she is a treasure of no small value.”

Dr. Maury recovered himself, though with an effort. He set Jeannette on the ground by his side, and still clasping her hand as if he would never let it go, said with a voice yet a little shaken—

“M. de Guillemard’s penetration is a recognised fact among his fellow-citizens.”

The smile with which M. de Guillemard received this compliment was not as pleasant as a smile should be. It left his eyes untouched. Nevertheless, he answered courteously :—

“It is at your service, my excellent Dr. Maury, at all times. Stirring days, these, are they not? And not likely to grow quieter if our most gracious king has his way. How do you like the prospect of a convent for your little one? Well, I must not detain you, though I am glad my good fortune brought me as a spectator just now to so pretty a scene. Believe me, I shall not soon forget it.”

As the Sieur de Guillemard walked away smiling, old Janson’s eyes travelled slowly upwards till they reached the doctor’s. His face was working with agitation.

“Threats, Janson,” he said, briefly.

“ ‘Twas unfortunate,” answered the old man, in the same tone. “But threats, at any rate, are useful.”

“Why?”

“They keep you on your guard. And, see, monsieur,” said the old man, cheerfully, “there has been many a threat, and many a danger, but so far the worst has not come to Caen, and if it comes, the Lord can keep us *in* the danger, as well as He can keep us out of it. As for the Sieur de Guillemard, he may have to

eat his mocking laugh yet, and find it a bitter morsel. Keep a good heart, my master. Here is the little one safe."

"And that is true," said Dr. Maury, lifting her in his arms again with a smile. "See here, my pigeon, thou hast not yet told me how thou camest to do such a naughty thing, and frighten thy poor father out of his senses. Why didst thou run away from the pastor's?"

"I had killed Barbe," said Jeannette, in her grave voice.

"Killed her? Bah, nonsense! I have tied up poor Barbe's head, and by to-morrow she will be as well as ever she was."

The child looked steadily into his eyes, then, with a silent gesture, flung her arms round her father's neck, and buried her face in his neck. So holding her, he nodded to the cobbler, and walked on to the entrance to a small house, where Madelon, who had been running out to join in the search when she saw the meeting, was standing prepared to burst into voluble speech. Dr. Maury checked her by holding up his hand. He turned into a small room, plainly furnished with dark oak fittings, and shelves containing no such abundance of books as would be found in a modern library, but yet a goodly supply of volumes, of which the binding was as fine as the print was clear and beautiful. Sitting down on a

chair, and keeping Jeannette on his knee, Dr. Maury desired Madelon to go to the pastor's house, and inform Madame Hamon that the little girl was safe.

"And give my love to Barbe," said a remorseful muffled voice, after which there was silence for a little while. Then Dr. Maury began:—

Did Jeannette not think that she was old enough to control these passionate impulses of hers, which certainly otherwise seemed likely to bring a great deal of misery upon them both? Would she not sit up and talk the matter over sensibly?

Whereupon Jeanne sat up, pale, her eyes overflowing, her golden hair escaping out of the close cap which had been pushed awry, her little hands lying one in the other on her lap, but still alert and attentive.

Now then.

In the first place, Jeanne was disposed to go further back. The first fault, she considered, ought to be laid upon Claude, who had solemnly engaged to be at home to play with her in the garden that afternoon.

Dr. Maury had some difficulty in disposing of this objection. Jeannette owned that Marie had told her his father had sent him elsewhere, but held that if this were the case, Claude should have left some particular message by which to excuse himself. What did her father think?

Her father fell back upon the undeniable fact that Claude was a big boy, and Jeannette a very little girl, and that so much ceremonial was therefore unnecessary.

"If her father thought so—" Jeanne said, doubtfully; "still—" and she shook her head.

Dr. Maury thought it well to make a closer attack. Even supposing that there had been any failure in politeness on Claude's part, was it right, could Jeanne for a single instant suppose it to be either just or generous, to turn the anger she felt against Claude upon those who were altogether innocent?

Dead silence.

Pushed further, Jeanne admitted "No."

"But I wanted to be cross with somebody, father," she said, looking up at him.

That was precisely what he wished to point out to her. Disappointed and vexed he could understand her being, but why it must necessarily follow that disappointment should make us angry; why, for instance, the other day when he considered the weather too wet for her to go out with him, she should have flown into a passion with poor Madelon, was really beyond his comprehension.

Jeanne listened gravely, with her head a little on one side.

"Was he ever disappointed?" she inquired.

"Frequently. Also Madelon."

This set her meditating; and he went on to remark that it further puzzled him to know why, when she had done this hurt to Barbe, she should have fled away from the consequences of her act, and gone home alone in a manner which she knew was against his wishes. *He* thought it cowardly.

This was dreadful. Jeanne held up her head, choked back the tears, and then said with a great sob that *she* had thought it was brave.

Brave! What, to run away from what she dared not face! To disobey him rather than bear what she had brought on herself! To hurt him sooner than hurt herself!

Dr. Maury's idea of bravery had always been a something which differed exceedingly from this. As for walking through the streets, of which she knew nothing whatever of the danger, and only was aware that it was a proceeding of which her father would strongly disapprove, he saw nothing of courage in it. She had done it without caring or stopping to think what was her duty, just to avoid something that was more disagreeable to her. If she had really been brave as he would have liked to have seen her, she would have stayed in her place, would have tried to do all that she could for those whom she had grieved or hurt, and been ready to

take the consequences of her faults whatever they had been. Now, having first caused her friends this trouble, she had added to it by her thoughtlessness, and given them anxiety which they might well have been spared. He would like his Jeannette to remember that true courage was as much better than boldness, as obedience was better than words, and principle better than impulse.

The lesson was sharp—sharper perhaps than any one would readily conceive, and most painful for himself, in his womanly tenderness for his little girl—but wholesome. Jeannette had received a considerable shock, and her father's words touched a sore place. She listened while Dr. Maury told her, very gently, of that higher law which should rule the wayward impulses of our hearts, of the Holy One Who endured contradiction, of the Blessed Spirit Who helpeth our infirmities. And when at last, tired out and exhausted with the day's emotions, she fell asleep (requiring, it should be said, with a touch of her usual imperiousness in the midst of her new resolutions, that her father's hands should clasp her own, so long as she remained awake), he stayed there long, bending over her, troubled by a hundred fears, tossed by a hundred doubts, and sorely needing, as he felt, all the simplicity of belief and trust of which the words he had been telling his child were

full. He almost smiled as he thought of her childish question, was he ever disappointed? Could he hope, seemed rather to belong to him. He could, and he thanked his God for it, but it was a hope mixed with much fear. He looked at the innocent little face, every line of which he loved, at the long lashes sweeping over the closed eyes, at the golden brown hair breaking into rebel curls, at the round dimpled chin. If they took her from him, if the persecution in the south swept upwards into Normandy, and snatched child from parent, how could he bear it? And then the question came, as it came often—should he fly while yet there was time? But to fly was forbidden at all times—it risked an explosion. Already the Huguenots were watched and spied upon, so that for one of the town to be taken in an attempt to leave the country might bring upon himself and all his fellow-sufferers the full force of persecution. It had been resolved among them that this should not be risked. And Dr. Maury was needed in his profession. For him to depart would have been to leave dozens of the very poor to the miseries of their sickness. He could not go. He could but that night, as on all other nights, commit his little one to the Merciful keeping, and for himself ask that he might learn the lesson of trust, and do his duty without fear.

It was the year 1685. The condition of France had long wavered between two extremes, great riches and unchecked power on the side of the King and nobles, great misery and suffering on the part of the people. They were powerless; their so-called parliaments were little more than a name. While the extravagance of the court was almost unlimited, the money necessary for its maintenance was ground out of the poor, who were burdened with the most oppressive taxes, while their richer neighbours were allowed to go altogether free. By this means an outward magnificence was kept up, wars carried on, luxury heaped round the rich, and all the time there was a black background of misery, with little attempt to lighten it. The kings were brought up to believe that nothing might stand against them, and Louis XIV., who at the time of which we are thinking had reigned for many years, when he was a little boy, and learning to write, used to have this copy set for him, "Kings may do what they like." You may see the sentence yet, traced in the childish hand, and how much of the sin of future years may not have had its first seed in those false words!

Meanwhile there was something worse for the land than the corruption of the State, and that was the corruption of the Church. Crying evils had grown up, the Pope and Cardinals were in many cases either

wicked or ambitious men—they, too, loved power and magnificence—they, too, wanted money, and tried to raise it by all means. It was the open traffic, the pretence of selling God's gifts of pardon for money which brought about the Reformation in Germany. In Germany and England the attempts to reform the National Church, carried out as it was in different ways, soon met with encouragement in high quarters; in France never. Henry IV. it is true was at first a nominal Protestant, but he dared not openly uphold his religion. To a certain extent he favoured those who professed it, and during his reign they enjoyed sufferance and protection by means of his Edict of Nantes—nothing more. And when he died they fell again under the same despotic kind of power which had tried to blot them from the face of France by the massacre of St. Bartholomew.

It was the influence of Germany, of Luther and Calvin, which had made itself felt in France, a hasty and fiery influence, which had its origin in righteous wrath, and had in it much that was pure, true, and noble. Yet perhaps all wrath is a dangerous weapon in man's hands, and it is certain that both in Germany and France it plucked down many things which should have remained; overthrew others which should have been cleansed, and rooted up wheat with darnel. The

greater number of the French Huguenots—who are thought to have had that name thrust upon them from their meeting in a vault at Tours, close to the Hugon gate—were followers of the doctrines taught by Calvin; others, and among them was Dr. Maury, held by the teaching of Luther. But the differences of opinion which, at a time of greater freedom, might have caused dissension between them, were now held as trifling. They were united by a terrible danger.

For the Roman Church never admits liberty of conscience. If those who differ from her cannot be brought to obey her teaching by other means, they must be brought into unity by force. This force could not be exercised in Germany and England, where the rulers, as has been said, had embraced the reformed religion; but France had no such safeguard, and the more other countries were slipping away, the more need was there to put down these new doctrines wherever it was possible by the strongest measures. And as for the king, he had lived an evil life, and now that he was getting older was very desirous to make his peace with the Church. Besides, there were other reasons at work. It was unconscionable that a king, who all his life had been taught that he might do what he wished, should be bearded by a number of his subjects who chose to believe something different from what he ordered them

to believe. How could all his teaching act now, except by enraging him against them. Then the Huguenots were a peaceable, industrious, intelligent body, and as the State wanted money, it would be very convenient to confiscate their estates, lade them with heavy fines, and grind them down until they were forced to yield. All this had been long going on in the south, which Louis had some particular reasons for hating, where he had sent dragoons as his "missionaries," as he jokingly called them, and where the poor people had suffered unspeakable miseries from the brutal conduct of his soldiers. But Normandy as yet had been spared these worst horrors. Severe and vexing orders as to the treatment of the Huguenots there were in plenty. Their children, girls of twelve, boys of fourteen, might declare themselves Romanists, and be for ever free from their parents. They might not sing psalms in their own dwellings. The lowest of the people might vent their spite upon them, enter and destroy their churches, kidnap their children, bring false witness against them—there was no redress. They tried to escape from the kingdom; this was forbidden. They met to pray in the ruins of their churches; this brought imprisonment—even death.

One hope yet remained, one protection of the law still spread its shield before them. Henry IV. had done

something for his Huguenot subjects, which the Church of Rome had never ceased to try to undo. He had, more than ninety years before, proclaimed a famous law called the Edict of Nantes, which was meant especially for the protection of the Huguenots. This Edict gave them certain rights, which they were able to claim, and it seemed the only thing which stood between them and utter ruin. And as yet, even Louis, who did what he liked, had not ventured actually to repeal this law of protection, though he got round it without scruple. Would he do so at last? That was the question of the day. That was what Dr. Maury and Madame Hamon had talked about in the pretty garden. That was what their enemies were always holding over their heads by way of threat, not to say of forestalment.

And if this came, what would become of them?

## CHAPTER IV.

## CLAUDE.

THE kitchen in Dr. Maury's house was a pleasant room, bright as scouring could make it, and a favourite place with Jeannette, whose *bonne*, Madelon, was also cook, housekeeper, and all else that was required, in one, assisted only by her uncle, the cobbler, who came every morning to rub and polish the rooms, and to do the marketing for the family or stay with Jeannette while Madelon went herself. There was no garden to the house, only a *cour* at the back, where the child made companions for herself with sticks of wood, her pigeons, and her white cat. She was not lonely, for she had an imaginative mind, and Madelon was ready either to play or chat, but she spent many hours with no other society, Dr. Maury dreading her absence from the house, with the dread of a man who has but one treasure upon earth. The pastor's house, however, had always been a second home to the little one, whose mother was Madame Hamon's dearest friend, and there, until the day of Jeannette's flight, her father had left her with perfect confidence in her safety.

On the following morning he had gone on his usual

rounds, and Jeannette was assisting Madelon in the making of some almond-milk. Assisting is perhaps not a strictly correct word. Madelon was pounding the almonds, and Jeanne superintending the process, every now and then abstracting one which she pronounced obstinate, and only fit to be eaten. Madelon scolded a little when the plunder grew too barefaced, but her scolding did not much affect Jeannette. Then came a breathless moment when the honey—which in those days was used in place of sugar—was dropped, golden and clinging, into the bowl, and it was at this moment, when Madelon and Jeanne were equally intent and interested in the process, that a cloak or some kind of wrapper was flung over the heads of both, completely blinding them, Madelon's bowl was snatched away, and a voice behind exclaimed in deep and tragic tones—

“Caught at last! Here, Jacques, Paul, Etienne, seize the Huguenot psalm-singers!”

Madelon's scream was so shrill that only the muffling of the cloth round her face prevented its reaching quite across the little *place*. Jeanne did not utter a sound until by desperate pulls and tugs she had got free from her covering, and then she was laughing and rosy.

“For shame, Claude! Madelon, Madelon, didn't you guess? Why, I knew who it was in a moment.”

But poor Madelon was too greatly terrified to recover her senses at once. Even when Jeannette had dragged the cloak off her head, and clapped her hands at seeing her bewilderment, she stared doubtfully at the lad who stood leaning against the table, and watching her with amusement twinkling in his eyes.

"Is it you truly, Monsieur Claude? Nobody else, for all your Jacques and Etientes? *Ouais*, but you did give me a start!" and the good-tempered girl burst out laughing as merrily as her tormentors.

"I am Etienne and Jacques and all the rest of them," said Barbe, bouncing forward, and swinging a basket at a perilous angle for its contents. "Didn't Claude pretend well, and wasn't Madelon frightened out of her wits? *Bon jour, petite*."

Jeannette had reddened a little when she saw Barbe. Though in her rosy face no sign was to be traced of yesterday's hurt, and her speech was as frank and hearty as if—as was really the case—she thought nothing of Jeanne's share in the matter, Jeanne herself could not feel at ease. She did not like to be reminded of what she had done, and she preferred thinking of Barbe as her willing slave rather than of one whom she had injured, and who might reasonably expect at least an apology. Then she hated being called *petite* by any one except Claude, whose pet name

it was for her. On the whole therefore she felt a strong inclination to ignore the past, and to go on as if nothing had happened.

But happily her father's words had made their impression, and though it was a novel and uncomfortable idea, surely here again there was something cowardly in this way of getting out of her difficulties. And so with her cheeks burning and her feet dragging somewhat unwillingly, she went up to Barbe, and held up her face and said—

“Kiss me, *grande Barbe*. Are you better? I was cross yesterday, and am sorry.”

Grande Barbe gave her hearty kisses, and a squeeze like that of a good-natured bear.

“I don't know why I tumbled down, I am sure,” she said cheerfully. “Clémentine never does. Only this morning I tore my dress, and Marie is mending it because they thought perhaps it would make my head bad. So you see that was all the better for me, otherwise I could not have come with Claude. See here in the basket, Madelon. Mother has sent you some herbs for the *bouillon*. You would have had some eggs, but they made sure I should break them.”

Barbe's acknowledgments of her own awkwardness were, as usual, frank and open. She and Madelon were soon absorbed in the contents of the basket,

while Jeannette slipped her fingers into Claude's. He pinched her cheek.

"So thou hast been in trouble, *petite*?"

"It was thy fault," said Jeanne, reproachfully. "Why didst thou promise, and then never even leave word?"

He laughed in her face.

"Was it so serious? Nay, little one, I had an errand from my father, and there were plenty of play-fellows left. Thou dost not suppose that there is nothing more important to be done in the world than a frolic with thee in the garden?"

"No," Jeannette answered sturdily, "but thou shouldst have said something."

Claude Hamon, the eldest of the family, was a fine-looking lad of fifteen, with dark bright eyes, full of fire, and a round firmly-cut chin. He had been at once his mother's darling and her torment, for in spite of the grave up-bringing of a Huguenot pastor's family, it had seemed as if his love for mischief as well as daring deeds could not be restrained. Already he was half a sailor, knowing all the vessels that came up to Caen, and as much at home in them as on the land. His father, a grave and somewhat timid man, used to lament his son's boyish tastes, and all absence of inclination for more serious pursuits, and his wife at

first joined in the desire that he would show a more intelligent interest in the great events of the day. But now she was ready to long that he had remained a boy. It seemed that whatever of the man had been roused was so rash, so daring and so impatient that she could but tremble for what it might provoke. Even Jeannette, unconscious where it lay, was dimly aware that some change existed, and that by its means her playfellow was slipping away from her. It was that sting which lay at the bottom of yesterday's disappointment.

Still there were moments when Claude was as much a boy as ever, and this seemed one of them. He was full of mischievous jokes, played at the expense of good-natured Madelon, until even her great store of patience was pretty nearly exhausted. Her saucepans were hidden, her *pot au feu* enriched by all manner of illegitimate articles, she herself teased, tormented, and almost irritated. Finally, Claude, having exhausted this fund of entertainment, proposed to go into the *cour*, and finish the manufacture of a pigeon-house which had been some time on hand.

"That is a deliverance," sighed Madelon, with a half-laugh. "So long as my kitchen is free of you, M. Claude, I am content. Only, mademoiselle, be sure and keep in the *cour*: do not let us have yesterday's

fright over again, for it gave me a trembling of the heart which has not stopped even yet."

"How was it, Jeannette?" said Barbe, seizing her hand, and dragging her with her usual impetuous goodwill. "We have never heard. Didst thou really go home all the way by thyself? Why, I, who am ever so much bigger, should have been terrified. A little, little thing like thee!"

"Why should I be frightened?" asked Jeanne, pulling away her hand. "You are so strong and so rough, Barbe! Little Fanchon comes every morning by herself."

"Ah, but that is not it," Barbe said more gravely. "No one would care about Fanchon. But for thee, Jeannette, if they could get hold of thee, they would shut thee up in the great convent on the hill, and force thee to pray to the Virgin, and never let thee see us again, nor thy father."

Jeanne listened with open eyes. Then she turned to Claude, who was gathering up some of the sticks which had lain about ever since his last attempt upon the pigeon-house. She pulled his sleeve.

"Claude."

"Well, *petite*?"

"Is it true what Barbe says? Would they do such a thing?"

Before he could speak Barbe interrupted.

“Oh, it is true, quite true. It is what they have done to Modeste la Haye.”

Jeannette still waited. Claude flung down a piece of wood, and exclaimed, passionately—

“Yes, it is as she says; it is true. Why dost thou talk of such things, Barbe?”

“Talking will do no harm,” said his sister, staring.

“But it does! These things are shameful, they hurt! What, are we poor driven sheep, that we should bear it all and do nothing? There are a million and a half of us, and we are goaded, persecuted—and they all say it will be worse, and yet it is ever that we must submit, fly, go peaceably to the galleys. It is insupportable. At least there is no need for talking about it.”

Alas, how many gallant young hearts in France beat as wildly as Claude’s against the bars! As wildly and as vainly.

But Jeanne was too much interested to consent to drop the conversation.

“Modeste!” she said. “What, little Modeste, who comes to your house sometimes, and has a father and mother?”

“Yes,” said Barbe, contemplating her first wound, a long scratch. “She has been taken away, and oh, they

are almost out of their sensea. I heard my mother talking. And now she will have to pray to the Virgin."

"She is as old as I am, and I would not—no, never—if father said I should not," cried Jeanne, with her cheeks afame.

"Oh, you don't know," said Barbe, nodding her head a great many times. "You don't know. They would beat you, and perhaps starve you, and it is very bad to be hungry."

"But I would not," persisted Jeanne, clenching her fist.

"Well, I can't say," said Barbe. "I should try not, but they always say I am stupid, and don't look forward. Clémentine is quite sure. She talks a great deal about it. Sometimes she makes us pretend that we are the nuns, and then we have to threaten her and to lock her up, and leave her without bread in some dreadful dungeon. But she is always quite steadfast. She makes beautiful speeches, such as would never come into my head, about martyrs, and how they may do what they will, but she will never renounce her religion. Oh, you should hear her. I don't suppose I should be half so strong, though I would try."

"You would not change, would you, Claude?" demanded Jeannette, who had listened with deep interest.

"No!" cried the boy passionately. "I would not change, because they have no right to force me, and I would show them that they could not. Whatever I was, I would not be forced to change my opinions for any man."

"But Marie says——" began Barbe, with hesitation.

"What?"

"She says all that is nothing. That we must not think or care about men. That it is of our dear Lord, and of what the Bible says, that we should think. And she says it tells us to submit and to be patient. Marie is very good," added Barbe, with a gasp.

"Yes, that is very well for women and girls," said Claude, scornfully. "It is not whether it is right or wrong, but that no one should force me."

He was hammering with all his might at the roof of the pigeon-house, as if it were the head of an enemy. Jeanne was looking at him with a glow of admiration in her little heart; he was so strong, so handsome, so determined. And yet Marie's words seemed to haunt her; she could imagine the sweet serenity of her eyes as she said them, eyes the same colour as Claude's, but soft where his were bright. "It is not of men that we should think, but of our dear Lord, and of what the Bible says." Certainly Marie was, as Barbe said, very good, though there was not one of them she loved like

Claude, and therefore he, too, must be right. She would ask her father something about it, she thought, and at the same time tell him about little Modeste, whose fate was full of interest for her. It brought home possibilities about herself which had never before entered her head.

“ There ! ” said Claude, stepping back to contemplate his work ; “ your pigeons will have a good house, *petite*, and will perhaps not stray as much as they do. Look at that big fellow ruffling out all his feathers in the sun.”

The sun, indeed, was shining gaily on all the beautiful old buildings, and the budding freshness of the trees. Even the little *cour*, which was but a poor place, was so brightened and gladdened by its strength, that it looked almost pretty. There was a rose-bush growing in a corner, some flowers clambering up a wall, the children’s young faces, Madelon’s big *cruche*, the cat blinking on a window-sill. Barbe put up her hand to shade her eyes, and looked at the pigeons.

“ If we fly, all of them must be left behind,” she said dolefully.

“ Fly ! you can think of nothing but flight ! ” said Claude, with contempt. Then he said, in a different tone, “ I will tell you who I hate — that Sieur de Guillemand.”

Barbe opened her mouth, to say that Marie thought it wrong to hate any one, but closed it again for fear of offending Claude, which she often did unintentionally. He went on, therefore, uninterrupted,—

“ He is so smiling and so civil, and all the time I feel he is just creeping about to find out all that he can and use it against us.”

“ But why ? ” said Jeannette, innocently.

“ Ah, why ? ” Claude answered, looking at her suddenly. “ Never mind, *petite*, thou art too young to understand. We will talk no more about it. Come and sit here, and I will tell thee the most wonderful stories about some strange fishes, which old Antoine Leroy has seen. Thou knowest that his ship has come in, and that he has been in the southern seas, and there are fish that fly, and others of beautiful bright colours, and at night sometimes all the waters would be lit up, and look as if they were on fire. Would it not be fine to see some of these marvels ? ”

And for full half-an-hour Claude held his listeners entranced, Barbe full of exclamations, Jeannette quite silent, only that every now and then she sighed deeply with an ever-strengthening conviction that, except her father, there could be no one in all the world like Claude.

These were spring days, and the summer came, as

bright, as sunny, so far as the outer world was concerned, as other summers which had no such threatening clouds. Caen had its busy tide of commerce, its cheerful streets, its sailors coming and going, its merchants hard at work with brain and purse. Caen had also, alas, its differing parties, watchful and distrustful of each other, one trying by all means to avoid notice and conflict, bearing with much that was tyrannical, with the hope of escaping worse, sober in their dress, grave in their families, earnest in their religion—another, detesting the heresy, and longing to see it rooted from the land. Perhaps the largest number of all was made up of the indifferent, to whom the religion itself was no great matter, but who were afraid of displeasing those in power by seeming to favour what was in disgrace. And this number was increased by such as had a private grudge against any Huguenots. M. Fleury, for instance, a rival doctor, hated Dr. Maury's creed as heartily as he hated his medicines. Lamont, *négociant*, would not be at all averse to a little pressure which should check the ventures of Berthon, *négociant* also. And so on.

But while the older people were thus laden with an increasing burden of anxiety, the children found almost as much that was charming in the summer as usual. The elder ones, it is true, were obliged to share their parents' anxiety, and to be prepared for a trial in which

they would have to choose their own part; but the little ones only felt themselves, if possible, more loved, more guarded, more tenderly taught. What happy hours Jeannette passed in the pastor's garden, where the roses were blossoming, and the swallows darting here and there! Even indoors, though not so delightful to her, had its pleasures, for though she disliked the embroidery, which Marie, who was an exquisite worker, taught her and her sisters, she did not object to spinning; and if she could sit near the great window, and every now and then, by way of refreshment, turn idle eyes to watch the bustle in the street below, there was nothing very disagreeable in her task.

Sometimes—often, indeed—her father would come in for the pleasure of seeing his little Jeanne after a day's busy work among his sick, and then he would take a book and read to them. The pastor, moreover, would occasionally do the same, but his reading was always of sad grave subjects, with long rolling words which were like Greek to the children. But though it is to be supposed that Dr. Maury's books had also the long words, he had a way of changing them for simpler, and, as he went along, of explaining what he read and illustrating it in a way that was perfectly delightful. The picture in the old oak room on such evenings was pretty and peaceful enough. The four girls at their

different work, Madame Hamon in her black silk dress, simply made, her only ornament a silver dove, Dr. Maury's keen and intelligent face looking up from his book as he repeated some little incident to make his meaning clear, his chair drawn close to Jeanne's, his intelligence reflected in her eyes. Then came the walk back with her father, perhaps the happiest time of the day, when Jeanne, with a dim idea of dangers about, felt safe with him, and free to chatter to her heart's content, and to pour out all her little history of the day with the fulness of perfect confidence, and the certainty of sympathy.

On Sundays they went to the little "*temple*," where M. Hamon prayed and preached, and the people sang Clément Marot's version of the psalms, with full hearts which cried out of the deep of their fear. Once during that summer they were startled by a sudden inroad of angry men, and harsh voices calling to them to stop their heretical clamour. A *fête*-day procession was sweeping by, and as an order of the king had given permission to the priests to hush the singing in any Huguenot church which they might pass, they had now taken advantage of the permission.

At this arbitrary interruption some of the younger men shot fiery looks at the intruders, but the pastor raised his hand to enforce silence, and many of the

elders covered their faces with their cloaks, and prayed mutely. Not a word, not an act answered the injurious words, or the mocking laugh with which the men at last hurried from the building; patiently and gravely the congregation waited till the chanting voices outside had died away in the distance, till the last of those who had run in to gape had gone, and then, instead of continuing that which they had been singing, M. Hamon, in trembling tones, gave out the fortieth psalm.

"It is but another warning," said the pastor dejectedly to Dr. Maury, as that evening they paced up and down in the garden. He wore a black skull-cap, but the usual coat (for gown or cassock were forbidden to the pastors, except in their churches), and had a pale anxious face, with a curious likeness, and yet unlikeness, to Barbe.

Madame Hamon, with her youngest child, little Priscille, on her knee, sat not far off, hearing her own children and Jeannette Maury repeat their Sunday lessons; but Jeanne was in an inattentive mood, and vexed that she might not run and walk with her father.

"Nay, I am half disposed to shut my eyes to warnings," answered his friend more briskly. "What can a hundred warnings tell us more than we know already? Let us hope; it is more cheerful, and of quite as much use."

"You have not so many to fear for as I," said M.

Hamon, with a glance at the group close by. "Nor have you a firebrand of a boy to keep you in terror. Claude has stormed over to-day until I have been forced to forbid the subject."

"Foolish boy!" said Dr. Maury, smiling. "Such pin-pricks of humiliation matter but little, if only he would believe it. I would we had nothing else to think about."

"Every morning I wake with a dread of what may come."

"Nay, my friend, why not rather with thankfulness for what has not come?"

"You have a stronger nature," said the pastor with a sigh, and the two men, warm friends, though so unlike, went on into one of the alleys of the garden, where they were hidden by the bushes.

"Jeannette!" said Madame Hamon's grave voice.

Jeannette started and reddened. She was standing between Clémentine and Barbe, and at the moment when Madame Hamon spoke was much occupied in contriving, by means of two slip-knots in her handkerchief, to fasten their hands together behind her back. Unfortunately this occupation had quite sent her lesson out of her head, and Madame Hamon was very particular about the Sunday lessons.

"You are inattentive, my child," she said, with displeasure. "I shall be obliged to give you a punishment,"

"She pinched me," said Clémentine.

Jeannette looked angrily at her, but hung her head without denial.

"*Ma mère*," said Barbe, eagerly, "we were playing; we were just as bad."

"But you knew your lessons. I am sorry if you set Jeanne a bad example," said Madame Hamon, who would rather have punished her own children than motherless Jeannette; "but there is an absolute rule about the repetition. Jeanne must go into the house, and remain there until she has learnt an additional two answers. Marie, do you take her."

The blue eyes filled with tears, but Jeannette marched away without a word.

Only as Marie opened the door of the little room, which looked dark and gloomy after the sunny garden, and Jeanne clambered with some difficulty into a great oaken chair, broad and deep enough to hold three Jeannes, she said, in a resolute tone—

"I am glad I am not Clémentine."

"Why, then?"

"Because she is mean and cowardly," said Jeanne, with great decision.

"Oh, Jeanne!" cried Marie, naturally shocked at this strong language.

Jeannette nodded her little head,

"It is true, nevertheless. My father said that I was a coward when I ran away that day I pushed down Barbe, and Clémentine did not dare let your mother know that she was playing just the same as I. And for her lessons, *ouf!* I whispered the word. Was that mean or not? Say, then, Marie."

But Marie only looked distressed; it always pained her to have to find fault. As for Jeanne, if the lesson of true courage had begun to make its way into her heart, that of charity had not effected much of an entry. She sat, an indignant small figure, upon the edge of the big chair.

"*Tiens*, if I am to be by myself, thou mayest go," she said, dismissing Marie with a grand air. "I shall learn it, because I wish to be in the garden with my father. And thou canst tell Clémentine what I said."

"*Chut, chut*," said Marie, with tender reproof. "Thou wilt learn it, my Jeanne, because thou knowest very well that it is right to do as thou art bid, and that my mother is very good to thee. And we are all sorry when thou art punished."

"Except Clémentine," persisted Jeanne.

Marie shook her head, but she said no more. She kissed Jeannette, and went away, leaving the child sitting upright in the great chair. She had said she would learn her lesson, and she did. Every now and

then a tear rolled down upon her frock, but she scarcely lifted her eyes from the book, and never once looked out of the window. She was just preparing to descend from her perch, having laid the book down by her side, when the door was pushed open, and Clémentine came hastily in, with a bunch of cherries in her hand.

“See here, Jeannette,” she said coaxingly, “I have brought thee these.”

Jeanne deliberately put her hands behind her back, and sat upright on her chair.

“What for?” she demanded.

Clémentine did not pause before this downright inquiry. She said, in the most persuasive tones—

“Thou wilt not tell the mother that I did not know the lesson, wilt thou?—thou and Barbe?”

But Jeannette had scrambled down, and, without a word or look, marched out of the room, leaving Clémentine doubtful whether her shortcomings might not be reported at once. She knew that little Jeanne’s word had a sacredness to which hers had never arrived, and felt uncomfortable, but she ate the cherries to make sure of them, and then followed Jeanne.

Hers was a nature which would always find it difficult to understand either honour or generosity.

## CHAPTER V.

## AN OLD FABLE ILLUSTRATED.

IN spite of the divisions in the town, Dr. Maury and M. Hamon had many friends, the former especially, among those who were not of the same religion. Scientific and literary men were numerous at Caen, which had always been famous for learning, and they valued the physician's talents, and in their hearts disapproved of the Jesuits' attacks upon the Huguenots. But the lower class of the people, who were ignorant, and worked upon by all kinds of evil stories, were easily incited against them, and stirred up to violent outrages, which were really contrary to the law, but which they knew would be overlooked and even encouraged. So much petty spite was shown, so many insults flung at their heads, that the Huguenots as much as possible bought and sold among themselves, and avoided—where they could—dealings with dangerous neighbours. Though no class of people stood higher for their scrupulous honesty, though their respect for law and order were such that it was said that when the crown shook on the head of the king, it was they who had fixed it firmly, still an accusation

brought against them, however falsely, was eagerly caught at and encouraged, and indeed at the time of which we write, although the Edict of Nantes yet existed to protect them, it was to all intents and purposes set aside.

By August and September, therefore, Dr. Maury, M. Hamon, and others of the same standing as themselves, seldom went about in public places, unless something connected with their duties took them there. Jeannette had to spend more time than usual alone, for her father would now allow no one but himself to convey her to the Hamons, and her friends could seldom come to her. Claude was, as usual, at his school. Her playfellows were Madelon and the old cobbler, who would sometimes fasten up his stall, boarding the great window, and locking the door, and putting a pair of high-heeled shoes in his pocket; would betake himself to the doctor's *cour*, and work there. Jeannette and he chatted very comfortably together on these occasions. She was a quick precocious child, with an excellent memory, and would either repeat wonders which she had heard from her father or Claude, or make little histories out of the boots and shoes which Janson brought with him, by no means displeased when the old man would arch his eyebrows, fling open his hands, and exclaim—

"But what! It is wonderful! wonderful! Our little demoiselle is like a book!"

Then he in his turn would tell her stories, but his were of a serious sort, chiefly relating to Huguenot persecutions, and ending with some terrible incident of the S. Bartholomew. Jeanne knew them all, and would have her text exact, with not a word left out. She knew how this one was slain with his wife as they came down the staircase, how that was saved by swimming the river, how a baby was hid beneath the clothes of the dead. The old cobbler told his stories with a trembling earnestness, for the days which were passed might come again, and the baptism of blood be renewed.

Who could tell?

This very child to whom he told his stories, an enemy or a spy had only to declare that she had been seen to enter one of the Roman Churches, or to make the sign of the cross, or kiss the Virgin's robe, and she could be forcibly taken from her father, who, however, would be still required to support her. Was it any wonder that old Janson trembled?

One evening or late afternoon- early in September, Dr. Maury and M. Hamon, contrary to their usual custom, found themselves in the midst of a crowd of sailors on the quay. As has been said, in general they avoided such places, unless the duties of their profession

called for them, but this day they had been persuaded by Claude to break their rule. To the lad, fond of adventure, no place in the town was so delightful as the quay, and he had established a close acquaintance with a large number of the sailors who frequented it. Many among them were of his own religion ; and those who were not were in general of a freer and less persecuting spirit than their own class on shore. Claude, at any rate, came and went among them without meeting with the insults which elsewhere set his fiery blood aglow, and for the last few days he had been teasing his father to go with him to see the vessel of one Chamier, which had just returned from England. Chamier was one of themselves, and Dr. Maury, always haunted by fears of a time when flight might be necessary, was not sorry to have an opportunity of speaking to a man whose help might prove valuable.

The scene was one of the gayest that can be pictured. To the left, every now and then as they moved about, the beautiful church of St. Pierre disclosed itself ; to the right, on the hill, rose full before them the massive gray buildings of Matilda's *Abbaye aux Dames*, with its three towers. The river ran smoothly along, reflecting all the shadows on its banks, and the brightly-painted, clumsy, but picturesque vessels, which were moored closely together, gave their own character to the scene.

So did the sailors, shouting, hauling, gesticulating. So did the bales of goods which lay about, the casks which were trundled, the ropes coiling in all manner of unexpected places. It seemed as if it were Caen with a great piece of the world let into it which made it larger and freer.

They could and did step on to Chamier's ship from the quay, a strange old vessel, as we should think it now, with sweeping lines, great bows, and thick bowsprit, which had lumbered down from the north with timber, stopping in England by the way. Chamier, a fine-looking bronzed old man, received them, and took the pastor and Dr. Maury into his cramped cabin, while Claude remained on the deck or quay.

"A fine lad, monsieur," said Chamier, looking after him.

"Over bold," his father answered with a sigh. "I would he had more of the discretion and learning of our famous *M.* Claude, after whom he is called."

"'Tis a different type," said the old man, shaking his head, "and under favour, *M. le Pasteur*, if you try to force his nature into a mould for which it is not fitted, you will be like the Jesuits, who make the cry of Catholic unity the excuse for hounding us poor Huguenots out of the country."

Dr. Maury looked up astonished. The sailor's remark

went deeper than was usual with men of his class. Chamier saw his surprise.

"Oh, I read and I look about me, and a man who does read and look must be a fool if he can't put two and two together. Pope and king both like their men to march with the same leg—well, well! Messieurs, now that you are here, is there anything I can do to serve you? Will you let *M. Claude* come with me, *M. le Pasteur?*"

*M. Hamon* shook his head doubtfully.

"It is impossible. He is well known, and would be demanded at once. Besides—I cannot tell; things may change, perhaps their hearts will be touched—"

The old sailor, drumming his horny fingers on the table, looked at him with a sort of pitying wonder.

"Not theirs! They read the parable of the Good Shepherd differently in these days, monsieur," he said drily. "They hunt their wandering sheep well out of sight, and keep up appearances with the others."

"Chamier," said Dr. Maury, who had been plunged in thought, "if flight becomes necessary can you help us?"

"If I am here—probably, monsieur. But that is a chance which is more than doubtful."

"And if not?"

"And if not?" He reflected for a moment; "I can

do nothing except on my own element, as monsieur can understand, but even there—*tenez*, there is just this. We are not so many leagues from the sea. If any one could get down to the port, there is a man there who would be faithful, André Dumoulin; his house is the nearest to the sea, and he has a great trading connection. Mention my name to him, and I will answer for his doing what he can."

Dr. Maury hastily noted down these particulars.

"It is well to be prepared," he said to M. Hamon, who gazed at him full of perplexed trouble. The old sailor, with his shrewd and obstinate face, looked from one to the other. At that moment a confused noise of shouting reached their ears, every tumultuous sound was alarming, and with one accord they hurried from the cabin on the deck. There among the cries certain words rose distinctly audible. "*Cagot, cagot!* Down with the Huguenot!" Dr. Maury glanced quickly not at the pastor but at Chamier. "Has it come, then?" he said in a low voice.

For the moment he had forgotten what the father's heart instantly recalled.

"Claude! where is Claude?"

A sailor who was standing staring where a struggling crowd was surging into sight, pointed silently towards it. M. Hamon, in an agony of terror, sprang on shore.

Dr. Maury was at his side directly. Chamier only lingered a moment to bid his men follow him, before they were all running to join the throng, which every moment was added to, and from which the threatening cries came ever nearer and nearer.

“Huguenot! Huguenot! To the river!”

The outer circle of the mob was chiefly composed of those who had joined it from curiosity, and were running and jumping to see what they could of what passed in the centre; adding their voices and shouts without knowing much of the cause of the tumult. But as the pastor and his friend, full of fear, pressed among them with a vigour which forced for themselves a way, the sight they dreaded reached their eyes. Claude, covered with mud, without a hat, his clothes torn, his face pale and yet furious, was in the heart of the surging figures, defending himself as best he could, but ever being hustled nearer to the river, and surrounded by an angry and threatening mob, among which were some of the lowest of the town, delighted to find opportunity for an uproar.

Dr. Maury, having his senses more about him than Claude's father, saw with a quick relief that he was not quite undefended. Two or three men were shielding the young fellow as well as they could, and appealing to those behind for help. Some were passive from fear,

dreading to turn the tide upon themselves; others were evidently entertained by the spectacle, and encouraged their neighbours by shouts and laughter, though taking no actual part in the violence; but the open enemies were the strongest part, and the danger to Claude was imminent.

Nor did it seem as if they could reach him. M. Hamon, who had been making frenzied efforts to break through the crowd, was quickly recognized and hustled back with little ceremony; indeed Dr. Maury feared that the violence of passion would be turned upon him, and the timid and shrinking man was, he knew, without the physical strength to resist it. The very shock might kill him. The physician, careless of his own danger, pushed his way desperately to his friend's side, and being a powerful man, succeeded in getting there. But the crowd thickened, the cries became more threatening, and matters looked very black indeed. He glanced round for Chamier, but Chamier, with three sailors, was standing on the outskirts of the crowd, staring, it is true, at what was going on, but taking no active part in the rescue.

Nevertheless, and although Dr. Maury's impression was one of disappointed disgust, the old sailor was neither faithless nor indifferent. He was watching, ready to take advantage of any movement which would

give him an opening, rather than increase the rage of the mob by adding to the blows and hard words. He saw that the aim of the people was to drive Claude towards the river, and with a whisper to his men, waited quietly.

Claude himself, furious as he was, was aware by this time of his doom, and felt a thrill of horror at the thought. The blows he had received, the fierce faces round him, made him dizzy; once or twice he staggered, and a mocking laugh from one man whose cries and gestures seemed especially to excite the mob, answered the movement. He set his teeth and resisted the pressure with all his young strength, but it was in vain, he and his defenders were alike pushed on towards the brink of the river.

Chamier and his sailors had done no more than stroll round on that side, except that one of the sailors, as if interested, had joined in the shout.

“Dog of a Huguenot!” he cried, “to the river with him! This way! this way!” and as a crowd often responds blindly to any direction, they pushed towards it more violently than ever.

Claude felt little more power to struggle left in him. He thought quickly over his chances. He could swim, it was true, but would he be suffered to do so? Would he not be pelted and beaten down, and left to float,

a helpless mass, on the bosom of the bright smooth river. All whom he loved so near, and yet powerless! His life—ended so quickly! In that one moment, what hopes, what longings, what shortcomings came back!

He had been pushed, hustled, jostled, closer to the edge, a sudden opening towards it seemed to have been cleared in a moment, a voice he knew whispered through the clamour in his ears—

“Jump on board the vessel—get by the chain into mine—for your life!”

He ran, he leapt! It had all passed so swiftly that the people scarcely knew they were defrauded of their prey, or who had snatched it from them. A dozen sailors seemed all at once to be in the way, to block the side of the vessel, and yet they were full of apparent vexation at the escape. But somehow or other no one could get by them.

“The young dog! To think of his playing us such a trick!”

“Stand back, *canaille!*” cried the man who had been most active in the attack. “Are you fools? Do you mean to let him escape you?”

“Softly, master,” said one of the sailors—not Chamier, who had disappeared. “No need for this sort of language.”

"After him! Jump on board, some of you, can't you, or let me pass," reiterated the man, trying to push his way. But the block still remained.

"Softly again!" answered the same sailor. "If I know anything of Black Michel, who is my cousin, half Caen in his boat will not be very welcome to him. But to be sure, some of us may go and fish out the young rascal. Here, Pierre, do you, Antoine, and one or two turn him out, d'ye hear?"

The sailors leapt into the vessel, and disappeared down the hold. Those on shore held their breath. M. Hamon, who had not known the cause of the sudden yell which had greeted Claude's escape, and fancied it told of some worse mischance, tottered back almost in the arms of his friend. A sailor pushed up against them roughly, and as if by accident, and said quickly, in a low voice—

"Go home. He is safe."

It was Chamier.

Dr. Maury, fully alive to the danger, lost no time. He dragged the still unwilling pastor after him, turned down a side street, and hurried him along. When M. Hamon would have remonstrated, he answered—

"In these days, where you trust, you must trust absolutely. I doubted Chamier at first; I know now that I was a fool. The only thing we can do at present

is to obey him, and wait patiently. He says Claude is safe. I believe him."

It was well perhaps that a turn of the street had so deadened the sound of a second shout that they did not hear it. It was caused by a sudden splash, as if some one had jumped into the river. Another minute, and those on shore saw a lad with a sailor's cap on his head, swimming to the other side. The sailors on board the vessel came running up, pointing and swearing. One threw something at the lad, but without hitting him. Those on shore did the same, but more than one had his elbow accidentally jogged, so that his aim was destroyed. At any rate, the swimmer escaped unhurt, and clambering up the other side, where only a few women were collected, fled for his life up a narrow passage between two walls, and disappeared.

Claude's principal enemy tried to rouse the mob to go round by the bridge, and endeavour to secure him again, but its temper had changed. Perhaps the remarks of two or three men who were standing about contributed to this. They treated the matter jestingly, said the young Huguenot had had a fright he would not forget, and raised a laugh against his tormentor. Gradually, therefore, the hubbub subsided. Nobody heard what the sailor, who had been foremost in

jumping into Black Michel's vessel, said to the man next him as they leapt on shore.

"It's well they didn't take to counting us, old Pierre, or thy boy would have been missed, *hein?* "

Pierre's answer was a grunt and a grin.

Chamier had strolled away, as if the affair were of little importance to him, and was now on the deck of his own ship, leaning over the edge. He was known to be a Huguenot, and therefore had been forced to act with prudence; but so long as he could avoid taking an active part in the struggle, he was not much afraid of molestation, the sailors being a body disposed to hold together, and likely to prove awkward if rashly meddled with. He took no notice, therefore, of a few contemptuous epithets, flung at him from a safe distance, but waited in the same position until the people had quite dispersed, and some lights began to twinkle in the houses. Then he dived into his odd little cabin, where, seated on a locker in the dark, was a sorry-looking, mud-bespattered figure, up to which Chamier marched, and laid his hand on its shoulder.

"I'm sorry, M. Claude, I'm sorry," he said, heartily. "'Tis bad to be hunted as if one were a wild beast, even at my age, when one has learnt, or should have learnt, philosophy enough to make it easier. Are you hurt?"

"I think not—not much," said the boy, dejectedly.  
"Where are my father and Dr. Maury?"

"Gone home, where I will get you presently, but you must put yourself into other clothes, or the streets will not be safe for you. But how came it all about? What had you done to offend them? 'Twas an unfortunate moment."

What had happened it seemed was this. Claude, leaving his father and Dr. Maury in the vessel, had walked across the quay, and, wanting to speak to a locksmith, who lived near the castle, hurried up the steep hill, meaning to return as quickly. There, struggling up the rough pavement, was a horse, dragging a cart cruelly overladen, and at the same time enduring barbarous treatment from its driver. Claude, who could never bear to see animals ill-treated, spoke hotly to the man, who chanced to be in the service of M. de Guillemand, and to be on the look-out for any cause of offence by a Huguenot. He knew Claude at once, seized his opportunity, and calling to some ill fellows who were standing near, managed in a few minutes to get together the elements of a crowd. Claude was too fiery and too imprudent to withdraw before it was too late, and, the dangerous cry against the Huguenots once raised, the rest, which we know, followed with great rapidity. It had ended better than

had seemed possible, but, alas! such an uproar was sure to be twisted against their party by the enemies who were always ready, and the fact that the Sieur de Guillemand was in any way mixed up with the matter was in itself a misfortune, though Chamier did not know it.

"There is an old story of the wolf and the lamb, which agrees mighty well with the way things are made to look at the present time, M. Claude," he said, in his sententious fashion. "Not that I think you have much of the lamb in you. However, I shall give you a cordial and some clothes belonging to young Mathieu, who swam on shore for you, and did it cleverly, too, the young dog! In those clothes we can get you home."

Claude felt too sick and dizzy to oppose anything. The whole affair had come upon the lad with a shock. Until now he had not really believed in the danger; elsewhere it might exist, but that his townspeople should actually threaten their lives was horrible to the young and ardent spirit which could not understand the reason of such hate, and he felt cut to the heart.

Chamier looked at him with some anxiety, as he saw how mechanically he dressed himself, and began to fear that he had been more hurt than he would allow,

which, indeed, was the case. This made the sailor the more anxious to get him home, and as soon as it was sufficiently dark, they started without much danger of recognition.

The hours had been full of anxiety at the pastor's house. M. Hamon himself, haunted by what he had seen, was the one whom it was most difficult to keep quiet; the mother, torn as she was with anguish, yielded at once to Dr. Maury's advice, but the pallor of her face, and the restlessness with which she paced from room to room, showed what she endured. The doctor could not leave his friends, though secretly uneasy to be so long away from little Jeanne. The children were awed and frightened, but it was Marie who heard the soft knock at the house door, and ran to admit Claude. Chamier would not enter.

Then came one of those joyful moments which seem to blot out past pain. They clung to Claude, smiling, crying; they felt as if he had never been so dear. Was he really safe? Had it not been he who swam to land? How had the tumult ended? Twenty questions came which waited for no answers, and in the first happiness it was not noticed that the boy was hardly in a state to answer. Barbe was hanging upon him with her rather formidable weight, when she suddenly felt herself lifted on one side, and Dr. Maury

turned the lad's face towards a lamp which stood on a table, and studied it closely.

"That will do," he said, releasing him. "Take him to his room, Madame Hamon, and don't let him talk; I will be there presently."

Late that night through the dark streets, Dr. Maury walked quickly homewards. "De Guillemard!" he repeated to himself, "nothing could be worse."

Inside his own door, Madelon met him.

"Monsieur is to have no rest," she said, in a tone of commiseration. "He is wanted at once by the Sieur de Guillemard."

## CHAPTER VI.

## MONSIEUR DE GUILLEMARD IS ILL.

IT will easily be supposed what was Jeannette's excitement at hearing of Claude's adventure. Once telling was not enough; her father must repeat it again and again, must enter into the smallest details, explain precisely how every incident was carried out, how after he had jumped on board the first vessel, Claude must have clambered at some risk along a chain by which he reached Chamier's, and how the other boy, by leaping overboard and swimming ashore, had bravely drawn off the attention of the mob. Jeannette listened with bright eyes and glowing cheeks, but she knew nothing of the deep anxiety at work in her father's mind as he told his story, or the anguish which, as he looked at her every now and then, seemed more than he could bear. If she had known it, perhaps she would not have made so much of her own disappointment when she had begged and prayed to be allowed to go to see Claude, and her father shook his head. He did not know what might not take place that day at the pastor's house—nay, after yesterday's

scene he had felt as if he could not let her any more pass through the streets. Matters seemed to be daily getting worse, and the cruelties which for some years past had been inflicted upon the Huguenots in the south, were creeping upwards to Normandy; there was already a talk of the dragoons being quartered upon them, and what that meant they knew too well.

"My little Jeanne," he said, taking her in his arms and kissing her, "be wise. Play with Mimi and Madelon, and when I come back this evening, see here, we will crack some nuts together, and I will tell thee as many stories as thou wilt. Will that be good?"

But Jeanne pouted.

"I want Claude," she said, in the same words as she had used months before in the pastor's garden.

Dr. Maury sighed.

"Alas, my little one, perhaps some day thou wilt want thy father," he said, gently; and he kissed her again before he set her down.

Jeannette did not understand, for he did not like to terrify her by telling her of his fears; she only thought it hard that she might not go to Claude, and hardly returned his kiss. If she had but understood what a heavy heart he carried out of the house with him!

Claude was really ill. He had never been as strong as he looked, and now the shock and turmoil seemed to have brought on a feverish attack. His sleep had been greatly disturbed, and he wandered when awake, starting up and crying out as if he were still in the midst of enemies. Yet with the fear before them of what notice the magistrates, or even the intendant of the province might take of the previous day's disorder, it was really a relief to them all that he should be in bed, and obliged to be quiet.

Madame Hamon followed Dr. Maury when he came out of the sick room, and they went into that where Marie was teaching her younger sisters embroidery.

"That Chamier, I must thank him," said Madame Hamon.

"I intend to see him to-day," replied the doctor. "There are certain particulars which I am anxious to get from him. As for Claude, he is best where he is."

"Do you think he will escape arrest?"

"I think his best chance lies in M. de Guillemand's illness," said the doctor; "You, madame, do not know that man."

"I know him to be the bitterest foe of the religion."

"Precisely; and also the greatest coward in the province. When he is ill, which is often, he is terrified out of his senses, and fortunately he believes in no skill

but mine. Why, madame, if it were not for that, should I be practising in Caen? You know it is forbidden for one of the reformed to be a doctor."

"What is not forbidden?" said Madame Hamon, pacing the room. "I have a letter here from Languedoc at which my blood runs cold. Oh, monsieur, with the awful cruelties which the soldiers practise upon them, is it any wonder that so many abjure their religion? Here is my cousin — her husband ruined by the dragoons, who pillaged his house, and by the fines levied upon him; because he has no longer money to pay the fines, he is dragged to prison, condemned to the galleys; his wife wanders homeless in the streets, the children are forced from her; she at last, hidden by some good Christians in a loft, after suffering incredible hardships, has escaped with only her baby to Geneva. May God pardon our persecutors!"

"And those who should have been on our side are against us. The Jansenists join with the Jesuits. It is an unholy alliance," said Dr. Maury, with his eyes kindling, "which will some day be their ruin."

The children had dropped their work, and listened open-mouthed. They were older than Jeanne, and their mother had never hidden from them what kind of trials might come upon them. All that parents could do was to teach them privately, for it was

strictly forbidden for the pastors to allude to the Roman Catholic religion in their sermons, or to warn their flocks against its errors. Barbe whispered to Clémentine—

“Have they, then, put our cousin Pauline in a convent ?”

“They might do what they liked to me,” replied Clémentine readily. “I should not be so cowardly as to abjure.”

“But if they beat you ?”

“Well, what then ? I should say, ‘You may kill me, mesdames ; I shall never go against my conscience.’ Our people will not be ashamed of me.”

“Ah !” said big Barbe, looking at her with a sigh of admiration. Marie raised her finger, for her mother and Dr. Maury were speaking again.

“The law which strikes us the most cruelly,” he said, “is that which forbids those who have fallen away and abjured either to return to their faith, or to leave the country. In either case it is the galleys for the men, perpetual seclusion for the women. However, dear madame, why dwell on our miseries ? Shall I tell you what the Sieur de Guillemard said of Claude ?”

“Do, I beseech you.”

“He said, ‘I have had some abominable chill, doctor, and feel as if I were going to die.’ In effect, he was

ill, and I thought a little terror wholesome, so I did not console him as much as I might otherwise have done. Presently he went on, 'Why are you Protestants so offensive? I hear that this very afternoon a son of your pastor fell upon one of my men, and so ill-treated him that the poor wretch had to call for help.' I answered, 'What you hear seems to be made palatable to you, monsieur.' Then he had a fit of shivering and of mortal fright, after which he stammered out, 'If you are so imprudent it is impossible for me to protect you. My brother, the Père Boisset, is always writing to me to urge severity, but you know I am at heart your friend. You owe me more than you believe, my good Dr. Maury.' The man's hypocrisy disgusted me, but I only bowed and said, I thought so, as indeed I did. Then he made some abject appeals to me on the subject of his health, as if he thought I might leave him to die, and at the same time let drop hints of fiercer attacks upon our faith to be made shortly. It is hard to know when the Sieur de Guillemand tells the truth, but I incline to believe he does so occasionally by accident. For a few days, however, he will be cowed and harmless, and therefore I think the affair of yesterday will be allowed to blow over, for the present at all events. Whether it may not be laid up as a useful handle against us, I cannot tell."

"What you have said is something," said Madame Hamon, drawing a deep breath. Then both she and Dr. Maury left the room, and the children fell again to their work.

"If I were Dr. Maury I should keep M. de Guillemand ill."

It was Barbe who burst out with this sentiment, in an interval between breaking one needle and threading another. Marie shook her head.

"That would be to abjure thy religion in another way," she said softly.

"Why, then?" asked Barbe staring.

"Because," said Marie reverently, "it teaches us to do good to those that do us harm."

"Oh!" said Barbe, letting her work fall in a heap on her lap. "It is dreadful! I shall never, never learn it all!"

Not yet, Barbe. Life's long lesson is not learnt at once. By little and little, through this sorrow and that joy, through small fret and small pleasure, by means which we do not expect, it is worked into our hearts, if only we will learn. And the Great Teacher is very pitiful.

Clémentine caught her sister's work out of her lap, and held it up at the end of her fingers.

"*Ouf!* how crumpled and dirty it is! Marie, didst

thou ever see such! I should be ashamed if mine were no better."

"Thou art older than Barbe," said Marie, with a merciful desire to shield what was certainly disgraceful.

"But when I was her age mine was never like it—say, then, was it?"

"No," replied truthful Marie. "Thou wert ever neat and particular. Yet, see here, Clémentine," and she carried a piece of embroidery to the window, "here are some leaves which are partly hidden, and they have not the fine work of the rest."

"Who will see?" said the girl with a shrug. "Nobody but thou would put the same work everywhere. And as to that, the worst is better than Barbe's best."

Marie did not answer. She was not clever, and it was always easy for Clémentine to talk her down. There was no great difference in their ages, and what there was did not seem to her to justify her in taking much upon her as the eldest. She looked with eager admiration at Clémentine's quickness and readiness, and would have been the last to understand how inferior her sister was to herself in what was really good. Perhaps they were all a little blind to Clémentine's faults, for as a little child she had had a long illness which left her delicate for many years, and caused them much tender anxiety.

When Dr. Maury had been out to the Sieur de Guillemand's, and paid a great many other visits, for his skill stood in high reputation in the neighbourhood, and it was quite true, as he hinted to Madame Hamon, that a selfish fear for their own loss was the reason why his practice was tacitly permitted by the good folk of Caen, he made his way to the quay, which the day before had been the scene of so much tumult. Chamier was superintending the lading of his vessel.

"Just in time, M. le docteur," was his greeting. "We drop down the river this evening. And how goes it? The town has been quiet enough to-day."

Dr. Maury in a few words explained the position of affairs, and the probably soothing effect of the chief instigator's illness. Then he continued—

"Let me hear a little more of your André Dumoulin, my friend. It seems to me I know his cottage, a little staring building at the end of a stony lane, near the beach."

"That's it, that's it. And he is as stony as the lane unless you get him on the right side."

"But he has a right side?"

"Most people have, monsieur," said the sailor, with a smile. "However, André will turn his uppermost if he thinks I'm in the way. Only in such a matter we must

be cautious. Let us see. Do you happen to have a quick ear for a tune?"

"I believe so—fairly quick," said the doctor, smiling in his turn.

"Then listen."

And folding his arms and leaning against a cask, Chamier whistled the air of a little Norman patois song, such as the young girls sang as they spread out the flax to dry, or the mothers as they sat spinning their babies' marriage portions. "There!" he said, when he had finished, "shall you remember that? Because if you greet André Dumoulin with it, he will be reminded of an old compact which exists between us, and will do for you all that man can do in the way of help. But let us hear if you have caught the air."

The doctor whistled it, Chamier criticising and correcting until he was satisfied. "That will do," he said, "so long as you do not forget. A pass-word is useful in these times."

"Too much may depend on it for me to forget," said Dr. Maury, gravely. "A child's life, perhaps. I thank you heartily, and wish that, like you, I could take up my house and be gone."

"Yes," said the sailor, "these are evil times, evil times. There is to be no Huguenot left in France, and yet they may not go out of it. However, I have given

a helping hand to some few already, and perhaps shall be able to set more on the other side of the water. But then, all they leave behind is confiscated. And what can they take with them?"

"England," said Dr. Maury thoughtfully. "I have one family of friends there."

"'Tis not a bad country," said the sailor, "if you make up your mind to it."

"It may come to that or worse. Yesterday was but a sign how the wind blows."

"Well, monsieur," said Chamier, "I must be on board if we are to get off to-night. And if you have need of André Dumoulin, keep the air in your head."

The doctor detained him while he gave Madame Hamon's message of thanks, and then, after looking in once more to see how Claude was getting on, he bought some nuts which he had noticed in the streets, and hurried home to carry out his promise to Jeannette.

But that night his stories were not unlike the cobbler's.

## CHAPTER VII.

## A DAY IN THE COUNTRY.

THE next day Jeannette had an unexpected delight. The child had pined for her companions and for both air and exercise, for the little *cour* was only available in the soft warm days of spring and summer, and had now become too chilly, and too much shaded from the sun for her to be able to spend any time in it. Claude's pigeon-cote was in full use, and she liked to go out and feed the pretty creatures which came flying to her hand and shoulder, and brushing her face with their soft wings, but they did not satisfy her as playmates ; while Mimi had lost her kittenish ways, grown grave and sedate, and except when she made long expeditions across the roofs, in which Jeanne could not accompany her, preferred a quiet doze in the deep window of the kitchen to the frolic of past days.

“She is growing older, my Jeanne,” said her father, when he had heard of Mimi’s shortcomings.

“Everything is getting old, I think,” said Jeanne, leaning her head back against him wearily.

He lifted it and turned her face to his to look into it. The little face was pale and he laid it again on his

shoulder with a sigh. That night he said nothing, but the next morning, which was a gray autumn day, with that quiet stillness in the air which is often noticeable at that season, he made a grand proposition.

"Wilt thou come with me for a little walk this morning?"

Jeanne clapped her hands and sprang into his arms to kiss and hug him.

"To see Claude?" she cried.

"By and by. But first we must go further. Out to M. de Guillemard's."

"All that way! Oh!" Jeannette's "oh!" was rapturous.

Dr. Maury was not without uneasiness. But the child was flagging, and he could not bear keeping her so close a prisoner. Moreover, rightly or wrongly, he had an impression that the Sieur de Guillemard was the most dangerous adversary of the Huguenots, and that while he was laid by no active measures were likely to be raised against them. He had no confidence whatever in his patient's gratitude; while he was ill he was at the mercy of his own craven cowardice, but when he got better his fears fled, and the instinct of tormenting became the strongest. Dr. Maury felt as if the present were a short breathing time before the storm descended on their heads; M. de Guillemard might not be able

actually to bring it on or keep it off, but it was certain he would encourage it with all his might, urged on as he would be moreover by his Jesuit brother. Meanwhile there was a lull, and he thought he might safely take little Jeannette, and leave her under the care of a family belonging to their own community who lived near M. de Guillemand's. How happy a walk was this for Jeanne ! Long afterwards, when many changes had come over her life, she remembered every little incident. They left the town behind them, and went along country roads in which she ran and jumped and laughed to her heart's content. Her father, for her sake, made himself a boy again, he raced with her, picked nuts and blackberries, pelted her with balls of leaves or rushes. The trees were tinged with the first colours of autumn, which every here and there brought a flash into the centre of some green mass, and edged the bramble leaves with glowing crimson. When now and then they had a peep of some distant view there hung all about it a beautiful blue haze which gave it an indescribable charm. Once when Jeannette called to her father to run, she got no answer. He was standing still on a little rising ground and looking westward. Jeanne, indignant at her play-fellow's silence, came and pulled at his arm, standing on tip-toe, and stretching herself up to see what there was to engross him.

"Father! What are you looking at?" she exclaimed impatiently.

"At something I cannot see, my little one."

"Something you cannot see?" she repeated, "but what, then? What can it be?"

"Who knows? Perhaps long years," said Dr. Maury, in an odd tone.

Jeanne was but a little girl, but she had lived much with her father; she understood when he was troubled, and now she tugged at his arm again with all her little might.

"Don't look, then!" she said eagerly, "look this way—there are some apples still hanging on that tree. Do you think where we are going they will give me an apple?"

"I do."

"And are there little girls there? Come, father, let us make haste; I want to get there."

He suffered himself to be dragged along; nay, Jeanette thought he had forgotten all about that strange outlook of his towards the unseen, when he played with her again, and watched the fresh fine air bring back a colour to his little girl's cheeks. Presently they reached the farm, a small old house, standing in its own fields, amid orchards of apple-trees. There was a cart with its great gray horse near the door, and the farmer was

talking to the carter. Dr. Maury was well-known there, and was welcomed. Little Fulgence was called out to receive Jeannette, who was to be left while her father went on to M. de Guillemard's; and this was no grievance, for the town child was full of delight at all the country sights. Fulgence took her to see the great stores of apples and pears, the cider presses, the ducks and chickens. Lecocq himself came into the kitchen to turn the great spinning-wheel, by which, later in the year, he and his sons would spin the thick cloth for their clothes. Madame Lecocq opened the great oak presses to show her the fragrant stores of fine linen, lying with lavender bunches between them on the shelves. Best of all, Alain Lecocq, the eldest son, set her on the high saddle of one of the white horses, and led it down the road and back again, while Jeanne clapped her hands with delight. Indeed nothing pleased her so much as the animals, the big gentle horses, the cows in their stalls, old Camarade, the sheep-dog, even the pigs, which were long and ugly enough to have frightened her. She liked them all, and could hardly be persuaded to come away, although it was happy work to run with Fulgence, fill her pockets with horse-chestnuts for Claude, and gather a great nosegay of lilac colchicum in the meadow. When Dr. Maury came back he held

"Yes, my child, many; and they weigh heavily. Do thou try to be his little comforter."

Jeannette said no more, apparently she had soon forgotten it. Madame Hamon went away, Barbe rushed in with a bang, which startled Claude, and drew from him an impatient exclamation. But she was too full of her news to mind.

"Toinette is crying," she said, "they have been telling her that she will not be able to be our servant any more. We are not to have any servants it seems. Claude, now is the time for arrangements—what shall you do? I shall cook the dinner."

"Not if I am to eat it! Why, thou canst not so much as make a salad."

"I shall learn. I began this morning, only——"

"What?"

"It was very unfortunate. The head of the pepper-box would come off, and—it has all gone into the *pot-au-feu*!"

"No wonder Toinette is crying."

"But that was only a misfortune," said Barbe, cheerfully, "and Marie thinks she can manage something. Before that happened everything went quite beautifully, and if we stay here, you know, and have no servant, we must all do the work. But Toinette is quite sure we shall have to fly."

Claude gave an uneasy groan, but he did not cry out as he would have done a week ago.

“Let us pretend,” said Jeannette, jumping up.

“Pretend what?”

“To fly. Where shall we go?”

“To the Netherlands. We will dress up as beggars. Claude shall be father, and I mother, and you the baby.”

But Jeannette’s years exclaimed against this; she would not be the baby, and objected so stoutly that the baby was at last represented by a bundle. Claude took no part, he shook his head silently in answer to all Jeanne’s coaxings, but as he was there, though a passive figure, they were only obliged to pretend a little more, and, having decoyed little Priscille into the room, the game went on very briskly. Priscille was easily taught to say *Donnez-moi du pain*, and the beggars had on the whole a fine time of it, overcoming all difficulties, and baffling their enemies with a skill that was really marvellous. No misadventures happened to spoil the pleasures of that day. Jeannette went home late with her father at peace with all, even with Clémentine. And she said, as she had said at the farm—

“Good night, good night! I shall come again very soon.”

But the days went by, and with October the shadows became darker, and the rumours from Paris more disquieting, and Dr. Maury was forced to keep his little Jeanne closely within doors, leaving her even there with an anxious heart. One day he met the pastor looking more than usually troubled.

"What have we done to be thus hated?" cried M. Hamon, passionately. "I have just seen the curé of St. Jean walking down the street; he is a good man, and I wished to ask him a question. He would not listen. He flung up his hands and cried out, 'I hold no communion with heretics. I warn you, monsieur, that your detestable religion will be blotted out from the face of this country, which it pollutes. We have borne with you too long.' Can you conceive a more cruel speech?"

"That is nothing," said Dr. Maury quietly. "The curé of St. Jean may talk beforehand, his heart is soft and will fail him when it comes to a pinch. If we had no worse enemies than he, I should not greatly fear."

"I see the Sieur de Guillemand is out again," said M. Hamon. "He rode past me just now, and greeted me with marked courtesy."

"Ah," said Dr. Maury, "that is much more serious." A few days later—it was the 18th of October—the

physician left his house, charging Madelon to keep good guard, and made his way towards the great street. As he reached it he saw the signs of great excitement everywhere, the church bells were ringing, people talking. Presently he met a jeweller whom he knew, and stopped him.

"What does all this mean, M. Lefebvre ? "

"Do you not know, monsieur le docteur ? " asked the man looking at him curiously.

"No."

"The king's proclamation has just reached us. The Intendant has sent to make it known. The Edict of Nantes is revoked."

## CHAPTER VIII.

## THE BURYING OF THE BIBLE.

To understand rightly the great distress caused by the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, and the severities which were practised upon the Huguenots for a hundred years afterwards, it must be explained what was forbidden and what ordered, at all events so far as relates to principal matters.

*Forbidden.*

That there should be any service in any of their churches throughout the kingdom.

That any Huguenot schools should exist.

That parents should instruct their children in the religion at home.

That any of those who had abjured should be received back.

That any Huguenot should leave the country. Penalty, if taken—for men, the galleys ; for women, perpetual seclusion.

*Ordered.*

That all who had previously left the country should return, or have their estates and goods confiscated.

That every pastor should quit the country within fifteen days, under pain of the galleys.

That all children should be sent for instruction to Roman Catholic teachers.

If these edicts are read carefully it will be seen how they block every means of escape. Those who valued their faith were not able to fly to countries where they

might hold it. That was forbidden. If they stayed in France, they were allowed no churches, no pastors; they might not follow any trade or profession; they might not have either Huguenot or Roman Catholic servants; they might not teach their children, or even keep them at all. Hardest of all, those who had fallen away might not return to their faith.

It may be conceived what were Dr. Maury's feelings as he hurried along towards his friend's house, after hearing that this blow, which had so long been dreaded, had really fallen. It seemed to him that he read the evil news in the eyes of all those he met, and indeed it was so evident that the king meant to proceed against the Huguenots with the utmost severity, that even those whose hearts might have been sorry, dared not show their sympathy. He was so much loved and respected in Caen that as yet he did not meet with open insult, but numbers of ill-conditioned-looking men seemed to have swarmed out from the lowest quarters of the town, and already to be gathering together in knots, ripe for any mischief which might offer itself, so that the street of St. Pierre was thronged by them, and the prospect was not encouraging. The news had but just come, and yet the town was in a ferment.

Dr. Maury's first longing had been to return to Jeannette, but loyalty to his pastor, and deep friendship

for his family, took him to their house. On them, at any rate, the stroke fell with the first severity, exile for him, separation for them all; he doubted how M. Hamon's shrinking spirit would endure the grief, or how he could bring them consolation, and he turned into the dark archway with a sinking and foreboding heart, finding himself hoping that he might not be the first messenger of evil.

He was not. At first he saw no one to tell him where they were gathered. In the room where the children worked and sat, there was no person, though a piece of embroidery was flung hastily upon the floor as if it had just been thrown there. But passing through this into a small room used by the pastor alone for his work, he saw M. Hamon sitting by the table, his head buried in his arms. Madame Hamon stood by him with her hand on his shoulder, her eyes, dry and tearless, but full of anguish, resting upon her children, who formed a second group.

As Dr. Maury came in, she looked at him and smiled.

"Look up, Adolphe," she said, in a strained voice, "here is our good friend to be welcomed; let us do what we can while we have the power."

M. Hamon, without lifting his head, stretched out both his hands.

"What shall I do? What ought I to do? Maury, do you tell me!"

"*Allons*," replied Dr. Maury, affecting a cheerfulness he did not feel, "there is time yet. You have a fortnight before you, and will be guided by events."

The pastor Leblanc has already been here," said M. Hamon dejectedly. "He it was who brought us the first terrible news."

"A good man," said the doctor. "Has he resolved what to do?"

"He remains."

There was a dead silence. Claude went and stood by his mother; she and the other children had their eyes fixed on Dr. Maury. A confused noise rose in the street.

"Leblanc is alone," said the doctor slowly. He had rapidly cast his mind over what M. Hamon meant him to understand. With another man his advice might have been different, with this one in his present position he could give no other. "Certainly you must leave this unhappy country; I do not think it admits of question."

Madame Hamon drew a long breath of relief, and then with something like a cry, she left her husband's side, and caught her children in her arms. M. Hamon did not seem to notice it. Dr. Maury stood and looked

at her with deep compassion. Alas, how terrible was the choice in those days! On one side a husband, on the other the children, nay, too often neither the one nor the other left! She said suddenly—

“Where then is Jeannette?”

“At home, dear madame. When I came out I knew nothing of what had happened.”

“Bring her here to us. And yet——”

She put her hand to her head. He saw that the struggle in her heart was becoming too great. He said gently, but firmly—

“You were right in thinking, madame, that your first duty must be to your husband. You will go with him.”

“Mother,” said Claude, stepping forward with a pale, changed face, “leave my sisters to me.”

“Not my little Priscille! I cannot part with Priscille! Besides, she is a baby; she knows nothing; they would bring her up in the religion of our persecutors.”

Madame Hamon seemed to have lost her self-control, and to be no longer herself. Dr. Maury, who had counted much upon her practical good sense, and more upon her strong faith, scarcely knew how to compose her, when suddenly the distant noise, which had almost imperceptibly approached, seemed to form itself into

shape—into cries and shoutings. Dr. Maury and Claude went to the window, and saw some twenty or thirty men hurrying along, carrying tools or sticks, which they had hastily caught up on the way. As they passed the pastor's house they looked up, a few stones and lumps of mud were flung, though aimlessly; then they yelled out, "Dogs of Huguenots! Down with their *temple*!" and with another shout the crowd hurried on.

The words had reached M. Hamon's ears, and seemed to have wrung his very heart. His grief was so violent that his poor wife, forgetting her own, clung to him, soothing and encouraging him, while Dr. Maury found all his own authority necessary to restrain hot-headed Claude from some rash act of attempted rescue. The boy had not yet learnt their own weakness, and would not believe but that something might be done. As for the girls, only Clémentine was crying. Little Priscille was sitting on the floor busily engaged in rolling a little ring backwards and forwards; Barbe had flung herself down by her side; Marie watched her mother, but tried to console Clémentine. By a great effort Madame Hamon put by her own grief.

"My friend," she said tenderly, "though He slay us, yet let us trust in Him."

"Oh, Céline, Céline, the House of our prayers!

And yet thou art right and puttest me to shame.  
What are the words?—my brain seems to fail—what  
was it of which the psalmist complains?—‘set fire’—”

Madame Hamon’s voice had grown clear and steady.  
She repeated at once—

*“They have set fire upon Thy holy places, and have  
defiled the dwelling-place of Thy Name even unto the  
ground. Yea, they said in their hearts, Let us make  
havoc of them altogether. . . . Look upon the covenant,  
for all the earth is full of darkness, and cruel habitations.  
. . . : Arise, O God, maintain Thine own cause.”*

“Yes, and He does, He does. What are we that we  
should complain! But, Céline, I cannot part with  
thee.”

She stooped down and kissed him on both cheeks.

“No, my friend, I shall be with thee.”

What that meant perhaps no one knew. It seemed  
as if she dared not look at the children. Barbe was  
sitting up, staring at her mother. Dr. Maury said in  
a low voice—

“Have you any thought where you will go?”

“The easiest frontier for us to reach will be that  
which takes us to Holland,” answered Madame Hamon,  
steadily, and speaking for her husband. Just at this  
moment the door was pushed open, and the Sieur de  
Launay came hastily in, pale, and greatly moved. He

was a Huguenot gentleman of large estates in the neighbourhood.

“You know the worst, of course,” he cried, “but do you know that they are already pulling down our church? Not a stone is to be left. Oh, this dreadful day! I asked the curé who was looking on if he could approve, and his answer was, ‘But Monsieur, without doubt! The Church should be one, and if those who stay cannot be brought back by gentle means we must use pressure.’ Pressure indeed! And a Christ-like form of unity! It is well enough for you, M. le pasteur, for you are permitted to emigrate, but for us—it is awful. No escape, and the dragoons for those who cling to their faith. I am ordered to receive four-and-twenty. You understand what that means. I cannot endure it, I shall abjure.”

“Oh, monsieur, fly! Do not commit this sin!” cried Madame Hamon.

“If I fly, my estates pass to my brother. No, I cannot. As for sin, the sin lies and ever must lie on the head of those who force you to commit it.”

“That is beyond the power of persecutors,” said Dr. Maury gravely. “Reflect, monsieur, I beseech of you.”

“Come into the other room,” said Madame Hamon, glancing anxiously at her children.

She dreaded their being shaken by M. de Launay’s

would have broken away impetuously, and flung through the door which separated her from her mother. But Marie's arms were round her, and she could not escape. And Marie's voice was soothing her.

"It is so hard for her—didst thou not see her face, and how she looked at us all? We must help her by being brave and strong, and not complaining. And, see here, perhaps some day we shall be all together again, and happy."

"How is that likely?" said Clémentine, in a fretful, injured voice. "Thou art so stupid with thy 'perhaps,' Marie! It is very hard that we should be left; and as for ever being happy again, that is quite impossible."

Marie looked down sorrowfully, without answering. At this moment Madame Hamon appeared in the doorway, and Barbe, breaking away from her sister, precipitated herself upon her.

"It is not true!" she cried vehemently. "We shall go too, shall we not?"

Her mother looked down upon her with a white, set face.

"Hush!" she said, quietly. "Children, you must help me—we must help one another through this torture. Think for Whom it is we suffer. Do not let us deny Him. Claude, my brave Claude!"

She stretched out her arms to him, as if to make a

mute appeal, and he sprang to her side, caught her hand and kissed it.

"Forgive me, mother, and trust me. I will protect my sisters and bring them to join you again when times are better. They must be better soon."

"We will hope, at any rate," she said, trying to speak confidently. "Meanwhile there is something I want you all to do. Claude must undertake it, but the others can assist. M. de Launay has just told us that not only are all our *temples* to be destroyed, but that the lieutenant of police is to make a requisition for books. All those which they call heretical are to be burnt. You know how your father values his books, and at any other time he would feel this sentence acutely; at this moment, however, he has deeper distresses which absorb his thoughts. Oh, my children, we must spare that good father all the sorrow that we can. He is overwhelmed."

"We will," said Marie, softly but resolutely.

"There is one book, however," Madame Hamon went on, with a sad smile, "which, alas, is heretical too, and which we would willingly preserve from this indignity. It is our Bible, children," she said, laying her hand on a great brown volume with metal clasps.

"They shall not have it!" said Claude, starting forward, his eyes kindling. His mother looked sadly

at him. Where might not his impetuosity lead him !

“ Nevertheless there is but one way of preventing it,” she said, “ and it is that which I have to propose to you. I have a small volume which Marie can conceal on her person, but for this big book we must find a safe hiding-place.”

“ *Ma mère*, in the great *armoire*,” said Barbe, looking up eagerly.

Madame Hamon shook her head.

“ It would not remain undiscovered very long, my Barbe. No, what I have to propose is this: that it should be placed in the small oak box which stands in the next room, and that Claude should bury it in the garden beneath the trees.”

“ And we may help, may we not ? ”

“ You and Clémentine. Marie I shall want myself,” she added, glancing fondly at the girl who stood looking very pale, but quietly helpful.

No better scheme could have been devised to turn their thoughts from the first sharpness of their sorrow. Even for Claude the exertion and hard work afforded a sort of safety-valve for his excited and over-wrought feelings, which seemed to urge him on to some mad act of rebellion, and made his mother tremble for the future. And it was just the sort of task in which

Barbe delighted. Clémentine, it is true, was listless and miserable, but it was on the whole better than having to take care of Priscille with no one at hand to whom to pour out complaints. Claude chose a spot where he could work concealed from the house, in case the lieutenant of police made a sudden visit, and perhaps, in the fierceness of his energy, he deliberately picked out a spot where the ground was harder than elsewhere, for it took him long and laborious digging to get a hole sufficiently deep and square. Barbe's questions meantime really pierced his heart, though he had forbearance enough not to check her, and she chattered on, now grieving, now excited, but always wondering and always hopeful.

"Shall we stay here, do you suppose? And if we do, who will take care of us? Perhaps Dr. Maury. Perhaps he and Jeannette will come and live here. Or do you really think they will shut us up in a convent? Then Clémentine must answer the questions, I could not, I should be sure to say wrong. But I think we might get out of the windows and run away, and Dr. Maury and Claude would help us, and then we might all escape together to where *maman* is. How glad she and father would be!" and Barbe, in her rapture, stepped back with all her weight full on her sister's foot.

"How stupid you are," cried Clémentine, crossly. "And you talk like a baby. Do you suppose they will let us go so easily? If I could only feel sure you would not disgrace us all!"

Poor Barbe's eyes filled with tears.

"I am afraid I shall," she said simply. "Thou knowest, Claude, I never could say our catechism quite perfectly. Oh, I hope I shall remember!"

Claude would not speak—he could not; he dug violently, till the drops stood on his forehead. A breeze was blowing, and yellow leaves came fluttering down from the tall trees overhead, a little robin hopped about near the children, attracted by the newly-turned earth. It all seemed the same as yesterday, and yet yesterday was years away. His pit grew deeper. Presently Clémentine ran and fetched the box, and put it in to measure the height and depth.

"That will nearly do, Claude. See, a little deeper at this end."

"Our beautiful big Bible!" Barbe said, mournfully. "But we shall dig it up some day. Now art thou ready? Shall we put it in, and then cover it up so that they shall not find it?"

"Not yet," said Claude shortly. "Stay here, both of you."

He took the book in his arms and carried it into the

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"The two girls read, and drew back with a sort of awe."—Page 115.

house, remaining long enough for Barbe's imagination to run riot over all kinds of possibilities in which there seemed a sort of refuge from the thought of the separation, which really weighed upon her more than the others knew. When he came back he was very grave, opening the book without a word, and signing to his sisters to read what was written there. The words were these :—

Buried, with tears and prayers, this 18th day of October, 1685.

ADOLPHE JEAN HAMON, *Pasteur.*  
CÉLINE CATHERINE HAMON.

*“Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.”*

The two girls read and drew back with a sort of awe, holding each other's hands. They watched quite speechlessly, while Claude, wrapping the Bible in a piece of silk, laid it in the oaken box, and fastening the lid down with care, placed the box in the hole which he had dug, and shovelled the earth upon it. Then Barbe broke the silence.

“It is like a funeral,” she whispered, pinching Clémentine's hand.

“I am glad it is gone,” her sister whispered back, so that Claude should not hear.

“But why?”

“Because it might have made them more angry with us.”

Claude finished his work with great care, so as to avoid as much as possible leaving any trace of newly-dug ground, which would certainly excite suspicion. The girls fetched handfuls of brown leaves and scattered them upon the spot. Even afterwards throughout the day Barbe was constantly running to see whether it looked as they left it, and as yet remained undisturbed.

During that first day, many of the principal Huguenots came quietly to the pastor's house to consult and advise together. One brought this scrap of news, another that; the feeling with all was that of profound sadness, with most of faithful resolution. It was evident that this trouble would sift their community—that fear, interest, peril of death, loss of children, loss of goods, would so work that some would fall away; but, kneeling there in the pastor's house, they besought God for a strength which only He could give, and most surely that prayer, with many another, was answered in the face of all the world. Looking at the Huguenots from the haven of a Church which carried out her reformation differently in many points, we—keeping loyal to our own—must give our warm sympathy to these faithful and persecuted men, who bore the fiercest rage of the battle of which we only felt a short fury.

The order to quit the country was served upon M.

Hamon that same day ; the search for, and destruction of his books, took place on the next. Dreadful as it was to see their father's room invaded, and his precious books torn and trampled under foot, the children could scarcely refrain from a smile of triumph as they thought of the great Bible in its safe hiding-place. As for Madame Hamon, she with great difficulty kept Claude out of the way, and no pang for those she was to leave was sharper than that which came whenever she thought of her boy with his rash and impetuous temper.

The parting was very near. M. Hamon wished to postpone it, but his wife, though her heart seemed breaking, urged an immediate departure. Information came to the Huguenots in roundabout ways, and she had received some which hinted that owing to their having some enemy at Caen—whom she guessed to be M. de Guillemand—it was very likely that hindrances would be thrown in their way, and that some attempt might be made to detain them on the frontier, until the fifteen days of grace were past. She therefore implored her husband to get their passports made out at once.

As for Dr. Maury, he had weighed the probabilities, and determined to wait and see. To begin with, flight for him was forbidden, and as perilous now as it would be later. And more, if he went, with whom could the Hamons leave their children ? He dared not hope that

they would be suffered to remain with him, but it comforted the poor mother to try to believe it, and he was thankful she should have even this gleam of confidence. He promised her to do his utmost to get Claude out of the kingdom; and then there came a parting on which we need not linger. In the gray and early dawn, father, mother, and little Priscille, started in a cart furnished by a farmer. The house, emptied of all that Madame Hamon had been able in so short a time to turn into *louis d'ors*, was locked—for Toinette had already gone—and Dr. Maury, with the four who were left behind, went up the street of St. Pierre towards his own house.

## CHAPTER IX.

## HER OWN MISTRESS.

JEANNETTE's delight was so unbounded that they all felt its influence, more or less. She and Madelon had sobbed together through the previous day, because it was found that no servants—whether Huguenot or Roman Catholic—were to be allowed to serve Huguenots. Madelon had to leave at once, she and her uncle meaning to take refuge with some relations in the heart of Normandy, where they hoped they might be overlooked, and meanwhile she was to go to the old cobbler's house. And as she had been with Jeanne since her birth, the separation was heartrending, so that comfort was sorely needed, and Jeannette had her first lesson in putting away her own sorrow, while she tried to coax a smile from her friends, especially, it must be owned, from Claude.

Dr. Maury was touched by Marie's unselfishness. She had taken her mother's desire that she would be like a mother to the others, very greatly to heart, and though the grief struck deeper with her than with them, she never gave way to it, but went quietly about, ready to help them all, with a cheerful patience which

he knew must cost her a constant effort. Clémentine tried her the most; she was fretful whenever Marie tried to comfort her, giving way to bursts of crying, and sure that no one felt their troubles so deeply as she herself. Barbe was quite natural in her grief, and sometimes her choking efforts to repress it were almost ludicrous; but though she made none of Clémentine's heroic resolves of constancy, she was anxious to do everything that she was told, and when she blundered, never lost either her goodwill or her good temper.

When Madelon had departed, which she did in a storm of sobs, Marie set to work to supply her place. Clémentine thought it unfeeling if she were called upon for assistance, but Barbe and Jeannette enjoyed giving it, and to Claude, poor lad, any occupation was a relief. Dr. Maury bought and brought home what was wanted himself, and forbade Claude to go out, dreading something which might bring an outbreak, all the more likely since the adventure on the quay, which had not been forgotten.

The physician was in grievous perplexity. Every day showed him that the measures against the Huguenots were to be pressed without mercy, and each day their position seemed more and more insecure. He was not sure how much personal interest might not interfere to protect him, but he trembled for those dependent upon

him, and only trusted that for a time it might not be actually known to the authorities that the pastor's children had taken refuge with him. He thought if they could be kept hidden for a short time, he would embrace some opportunity of flight, perhaps in two parties, if Claude's prudence could be trusted so far. No one knew what he endured in going out in the morning, and leaving this young household alone and undefended. The door was fastened with strong bolts, and a loophole of observation appointed ; but no answer was to be given in case of knocking, so that the house might be supposed to be empty. Sometimes he fancied there were suspicions abroad, but they were early days as yet, and if he were suspected, the police perhaps felt that they held their prey securely, and could afford a day or two's pause. Moreover, he had friends.

It was, perhaps, not to be expected that Clémentine and Jeannette should be in the same house, without occasional breaches of the peace taking place, Jeanne being by no means disposed to yield as the sisters generally yielded, and requiring more attention on her own account than Clémentine was inclined to pay. When they were all using a great deal of energy in their management of the household, it was unbearable that one should not only refuse to take her proper share, but accuse the others of want of proper feeling—unbearable

at any rate to Jeanne. She tried to stir Claude to interference, but the boy was moody and dispirited, hating his enforced inaction, and inclined to treat such grievances as foolish, childish squabbles, to which no one could attend at this time. One day Jeanne was made more than usually angry. Marie had the rooms to clean, and had asked her sister to take the mending, which was always in hand ; Clémentine had replied angrily that she was not a servant, or bound to obey Marie's orders.

“To obey !” Marie repeated, with a little flash of reproachful indignation. But that was all, and she went away without another word, leaving Jeannette behind her in a fume.

What passed between the two, no one knew. Clémentine had a way of irritating the child, and of treating her sayings with contempt, so that probably she increased her anger ; at any rate, when Dr. Maury came home, Jeanne contrived to get him by himself, and to pour out a torrent of complaints against Clémentine and her conduct in the house. Since they had been with him, he had not seen much of their different natures. He was a great deal away from home, and the manners of the time required much formal respect from children to their elders, so that when he entered the room they rose and curtsied, and did not speak until they were

first addressed. He was aware also, that Jeanne herself would not be at all the worse for meeting with the contradiction to which she was too much unused, and would therefore have treated her accusations very lightly but for one thing, that he thought Marie's authority should be supported, and the more so as he understood she would not be likely to assert it herself. With this in his mind, he talked soberly to Jeanne, whose panting indignation gradually yielded to this treatment, particularly when he had brought her to acknowledge that with father and mother gone, and their own fate so uncertain, the utmost kindness and forbearance should be carefully shown to the Hamons. And if to one, then, certainly, to all. This was the difficulty, but at last Jeannette was persuaded to agree.

Nevertheless, Dr. Maury did not let the affair pass without calling Clémentine and making her fully understand that Marie's directions were to be obeyed. Her mother had put her in her place, and it was an arrangement which he insisted should be carried out while they remained in his house; indeed, amid the great trouble and danger which surrounded them, the children must one and all do their utmost to avoid giving unnecessary anxiety. Dr. Maury was rather pleased with the manner in which Clémentine received his lecture, for she made no attempt to speak, standing

with her eyes cast down, and only answering by a low curtsey when he told her kindly that she might go; but she fled up to Barbe, who was in their sleeping-room, dolefully trying to make it as tidy as Marie liked to see it, and burst into such a torrent of complaint, that Barbe stood staring open-mouthed, holding a brush in one hand and a shoe in the other.

“It is shameful, it is insupportable!” cried Clémantine. “Maman never intended me to be a slave!”

“A slave!” faltered Barbe, dropping both brush and shoe, and rushing at her sister with a vague terror as to what had happened. “Have they found us out? Is it the galleys?”

“The galleys! Thou art a real imbecile, Grande Barbe! The galleys for women! No, they have not found us out,—if they had I could endure it. That would be persecution for religion, but this——! Just because Marie fidgets and fusses over everything, I am to be ordered about, and to do what she wishes, and to have that tiresome little Jeannette going and telling her father and complaining. It is unendurable!”

Barbe had picked up her property again, and stood thoughtfully regarding it.

“Well, I don’t know,” she said; “I am not clever, as thou art. But I should have thought it was easier to

do what one was told, than to be a martyr. It would be for me, I know."

"That is because thou art so silly," said her sister, impatiently. "There would be some glory in bearing persecutions, but to submit to Marie, who is scarcely a year older than I am, and to be complained of by that child—*ouf*, it is something quite different!"

It seemed as if Clémentine found it so. She did not dare disobey Dr. Maury's orders, but she made such a misery of all that Marie asked her to do, that poor Marie blamed herself, wept bitter tears over the estrangement, and took all that was most disagreeable into her own hands, to Jeannette's increasing indignation. Clémentine moved about, looking so fretful and miserable, that Claude seemed cheerful by her side. Besides, Jeanne, as usual, was ready with excuses for Claude: he was the eldest, almost a man in her eyes, and of course it was hard for him to be shut in, when he wanted to be actively employed. She pitied him with all her heart, and lavished all her tenderest little cares upon him, often succeeding in rousing him out of his despondency.

As for Barbe, who Clémentine said had no feelings, she managed so well without them as to be a sort of rough-and-ready comforter for everybody, and Marie's right hand.

Clémentine's greatest resource was in looking out of window. This was, of course, a dangerous pleasure, and so surrounded with restrictions, that Barbe used to march by keeping her eyes stiffly before her for fear of temptations. But Clémentine laughed at the idea of being seen, and spent so much time there, that, to Jeannette's great disgust, she was often the first to see Dr. Maury, and to run to let him in.

One day he had all but reached his house, when he met M. de Guillemand. Such an encounter was always disagreeable to the physician, for although he perhaps owed his own safety to this man, he could never trust him, and the cowardice which made him tremble for his life when ill, made him also tremble for his soul when well, and try by all means to please his brother-in-law, Père Boisset, a leading Jesuit. It was, however, impossible to avoid him, as M. de Guillemand joined him, and seemed bent upon conversation.

"Well, my excellent doctor, how goes it with you?" he said, with a laugh. "Are you beginning to awake to the fact which our most Gracious Louis le Grand is doing his best to impress upon you, that he has no Huguenots among his subjects?"

"That he has no subjects more faithful and more unfortunate, you would say, monsieur," replied Dr. Maury, gravely.

“Pardon me, by no means. The Edict is revoked because it is no longer needed. You do not exist, you have all abjured your errors, therefore what need have you of pastors or *temples*? The logic is unanswerable.”

His tone was full of mockery. Dr. Maury refrained from any reply. Presently M. de Guillemard went on, using the aristocratic oath of the period.

“Behead me, but I have been wondering what you intend to do yourself. Shall you abjure? Otherwise you will not be allowed to practise any longer.”

“That will be a loss for others as well as for myself, monsieur,” answered the physician, without change of countenance.

“And your child? But perhaps you do not object to a convent? At any rate it will be more agreeable for her than the soldiers you may shortly expect to have quartered upon you. Bali, monsieur my doctor,” he went on more rapidly, “you are a wiser man than you profess to be. What are these foolish prejudices after all? Abjure, and keep your child.”

“If your advice is honest, I thank you for it, monsieur,” said Dr. Maury. “My God, it is true, gives me different teaching, but perhaps that is not strange.”

The Sieur darted a look at him, then turned and walked towards the door of his house, saying angrily—

“Well, you are warned. You have only yourself to

blame. What of your pastor? He has taken himself off, by what I hear, and his wife with him. Are they in safety?"

"No choice was left him. As to their safety I have heard nothing."

"But his children? Are they in safety also?" said M. de Guillemand, turning suddenly.

"Let us hope so, at any rate, monsieur," answered Dr. Maury, a little disconcerted. "Perhaps you have some information you can——"

He stopped suddenly. They were by this time standing at his own door, but he had given no signal that he was there. Nevertheless at this moment the door opened, and Clémentine, smiling and radiant as she had not been for days, appeared within. From the window she had seen Dr. Maury approach, accompanied by a strange gentleman, whose costly attire excited her deep interest, and arguing with herself that since he was with their guardian he must be a friend, and very desirous to make a closer acquaintance, she had hastened to open the door without choosing to obey his directions and wait for the signal. The Sieur turned to his companion with a smile a little broader than usual.

"Are all your hopes as well-founded, my excellent monsieur?" he said. "In that case I congratulate you.

A charming addition to your household, on my word ! I trust that mademoiselle can assure me that her amiable brother and sisters are as well cared for as herself ? ”

He advanced towards Clémentine as he spoke, hat in hand, and she, in great delight at his respect, answered with a blush and curtsey that they were all well.

“ Clémentine,” said Dr. Maury sternly, “ go to your room.”

“ No, excuse me,” said M. de Guillemand, stopping her with an air of authority. “ With your permission, monsieur, I must put a few questions to this young lady. Mademoiselle,” he continued, persuasively, “ is it possible you remain a Huguenot ? ”

“ Yes, monsieur,” stammered Clémentine, with another curtsey.

“ I can hardly conceive it credible ! But why ? ”

“ Monsieur—we—we are all Huguenots.”

“ Ah, that is it ? To be sure !—how can you know better ? And I will wager they have not so much as told you that you are free to choose.”

“ The child will follow the faith of her fathers,” said Dr. Maury, troubled.

“ Silence, monsieur,” said the Sieur, flashing round upon him, “ or I shall prove that you are influencing her illegally.”

Clémentine stared. "Silence!" to Dr. Maury! She began to look at his companion with great respect. He resumed his silky voice when he spoke again to her.

"So much charm hidden in a convent!—ah, made-moiselle, you will not be so cruel. Let me assure you of this, that by commandment of our gracious king, you have the most perfect liberty of choice. You have only to declare yourself of the true faith, and you will be released from all control on the part of either relations or guardians. You will be absolutely free. If you are obstinate, nothing lies before you but beggary and imprisonment; but you will not be, you will show greater wisdom; I see it in your eyes."

Surely his manner, his deference, were quite charming! Clémentine bridled and reddened, and thought if this were persecution, it was certainly pleasant, especially after the lecture to which she had been treated of late. A law which enacted that neither Dr. Maury nor Marie could have any control over her, and made her her own mistress, put the matter before her in a very different light to that in which she had been taught to look at it. And this gentleman, whoever he was, spoke most becomingly. M. de Guille-mard was quite aware that his words had taken effect. He had all along suspected where the children were

hidden, and an inveterate dislike to the pastor had made him resolve that they should very quickly be put to the test. But to get them to abjure would be the hardest blow that could be inflicted on their father. He took leave of Clémentine with a mock courtesy which quite turned her head, and bowing coldly to Dr. Maury, departed.

"You have disobeyed me, and I fear done great mischief," said Dr. Maury in a displeased tone to Clémentine. "Go in now; I will speak further by and by."

He was indeed most seriously uneasy. The Sieur's threats of the dragoons tallied with other information which he had received, and he felt that it was impossible to shelter the children in the house, or keep his Jeannette there, if the soldiers, of whose barbarities he had heard only too much, were to be quartered upon them. Flight, therefore, presented itself as the best chance of safety, but now that it was known that the pastor's family was in the house, flight was much more difficult and dangerous. His heart ached with the fear of having his one treasure, his little Jeanne, snatched from him, and he knew that if only he were free to go off himself with her, he might baffle their enemies, and make good their escape; but with four others on his hands, the peril was so infinitely increased that he felt

as if it would be insurmountable. The only chance seemed to him to lie in a division of their party, but how could this be? To whom could he confide his precious Jeanne out of his own care? Yet how could he desert the children cast orphans upon his hands!

The struggle was terrible, and it ended on his knees. When he rose he had made his resolve. Claude should be trusted with Jeanne, and these two try to escape to England. He would take charge of the others, waiting a day or two longer, and suffering their choice of a place of refuge to be guided by circumstances. But for his Jeanne, if she were to go, it must be at once. He left the house again, and did not return for more than an hour.

Meanwhile Clémentine's thoughts were in a whirl of affronted pride and gratified vanity. Dr. Maury's displeased words gave her a further excuse for flying out against those set over her. Little indeed did he know of what was due to her when he could order her here and there as if she were a baby! She did not know who M. de Guillemand was, and thought of him only as the strange gentleman; but it was very evident that he could show her real courtesy, and if others of his religion were like him, it could scarcely have so much wrong in it as she had been taught. Very likely much that

had been said against it was prejudice, or arose from ignorance ; if she knew a little more of it she would be better able to judge. Of course, if they had tried to force her, or to persecute them for not conforming, she would have resisted to the very last ; but this seemed something quite different—so pleasant, so sensible, so appreciative ! She was determined to say nothing either to Marie or to Claude, who were simply obstinate, and besides would wish to keep her under control ; but she amused herself with picturing in her mind what her new life would be like, if she did exercise her own right of judgment, where she would live, what gay friends might be round her, and what favours would not be showered upon her.

She was in this frame of mind when Barbe came to tell her that she was wanted by Dr. Maury. He meant to speak very seriously to her about more carefully obeying his directions, but M. de Guillemand's words had been too trifling and too full of mockery to dwell in his own mind, and he never dreamed of the mischief they were working in hers ; added to which he was weighed upon by a heavy grief, which, perhaps, prevented his noticing signs which at another time might not have escaped him. Yet, without knowing why, he was not so well pleased with Clémentine's behaviour at this interview as at the last. She listened quite as

respectfully, it was true, but no expression, either of face or words, seemed to show that she was sorry for what she had done; only once, when he mentioned M. de Guillemard's name, she looked up with a glance of astonishment, and once he could almost have believed he saw a flickering smile hover on the corners of her mouth. Perhaps this made him speak with more sharpness when he told her he expected a closer attention to his wishes for the future; at any rate she left him with her foolish little brain fuller than ever of dreams of rebellion and the delights of liberty.

Dr. Maury's next interview was with Claude. To him he unfolded the plan he had formed that day, and, as he expected, Claude's delight was excessive. Anything was welcome which brought action, and he was touched by, and proud of, the trust which Dr. Maury showed by confiding Jeanne to him. With what anguish it was done he never knew. What fears, what forebodings lay heavy on the father's heart he could not so much as guess, nor how the knowledge of his own hot-headed rashness added tenfold to the anxiety. Yet Dr. Maury knew that Claude would give his life for little Jeanne. There was no doubt of his faithfulness, if only he would be prudent. He could not take her himself, for then he must desert his other trust, and he

could only follow the best course that seemed open, and trust to the protecting mercy of his God. Claude and Jeanne were to start the next morning by a means that he had that day provided, and to make their way to the coast, where he hoped they would be helped by Chamier's friend. Much of the time he spent in impressing upon Claude the tune which was to be the passport to Dumoulin's good graces, and which it was to be hoped would do all that Chamier prognosticated for it. He gave him a packet of *louis d'ors* to conceal on his person, together with papers and introductions to friends in England, and a hundred charges for Jeanne's safety. His hope was to set off himself on another route by perhaps the following day, taking the pastor's other children with him, and making for either England or Switzerland, as the way seemed most open, so as, at any rate, to reach England by and by, and on his road to restore the three sisters to their parents, who he trusted were safe at Amsterdam, though no letter had reached them.

When Claude had left him, full of confidence and spirit, Dr. Maury went up to his room. There—in a little curtained recess—lay his child, his darling, in a sound sweet sleep. His first impulse was to awaken *her*, to press her to his heart; but he refrained, thinking of what the next day would bring of grief and

fatigue. He bent down and softly kissed the soft cheek, and smoothed back the pretty curly hair. And if ever from God's earth a prayer went up strong and fervent, it was his as he knelt beside his little Jeanne, and prayed that she might be kept—body, soul, and spirit—safe from harm.

## CHAPTER X.

## A CARTLOAD OF APPLES.

HER father's kisses roused little Jeanne next morning. She looked at him in some wonder. He was fully dressed, and she would have fancied he had not been to bed for the night, even that he had been crying, only that either was so very unlikely. And he spoke quite cheerfully, as if he had some pleasant surprise in store for her.

"Wake up, my Jeannette, I have something to tell thee. Thou and Claude are going off on a little expedition by yourselves."

She clapped her hands.

"Claude and I!"

"Yes, my child," said poor Dr. Maury, beating back the anguish of his heart, "at once."

"Where are we going, then? To the farm where Fulgence lives? And not thou?"

"Only you two. And it is not to the farm. Listen, Jeanne, it is not all play, and thou must be very wise and reasonable. Wilt thou remember all I am going to say?"

“Yes, *mon père*.” She was looking at him curiously, as he felt. He said cheerfully—

“We all want to get out of this place, where the people are unkind, and will not let us serve God as we would. And they do not wish us to go. So, thou seest, we must slip away without their knowing anything about it.”

“Yes, yes, as beggars!” cried Jeannette enthusiastically. “Oh, that will be charming!”

“Not quite as beggars. Thou art going in one of M. Lecocq’s apple-carts, and Fulgence’s brother and Claude will take care of thee. And then thou wilt go in a boat—think of that!”

Her face had grown graver, he could see.

“But thou wilt come, too?” she said anxiously.

“Not to-day, my Jeanne. We cannot all go together. Thou and Claude to-day, then I and the others perhaps to-morrow. And, see here, thou must do all that Claude tells thee.”

“I would rather wait,” she said determinedly.

“Listen, my child,” said her father gravely. “I am very sad, but I know it must be as I say, and, little as thou art, thou must help me. For my sake thou wilt go cheerfully, and say a little prayer to the good God that I may soon have thee again. Now get up, and dress thyself in these clothes. Dost thou know that they are Fulgence’s? I brought them back for thee yesterday.”

Strangely enough, as he thought, she made no other appeal, though every now and then she suddenly flung her arms round his neck. It seemed as if she realised something of his pain and would not add to it. The clothes made a little diversion. The other children met them in the kitchen; Claude had told Marie the night before, but Barbe and Clémentine knew nothing until that morning, and were full of wonder and interest, Barbe especially thrilling all over with what was an actual flight in disguise. To Marie the separation from Claude was terrible, but she was the one who best realised what Dr. Maury was giving up for their sake, and only dreaded adding to his trouble. It was she who talked cheerfully, who made the coffee which was given them that morning by way of a treat, and filled Jeanne's pockets with little rolls she had baked herself, until they stuck out on both sides in wonderful shapes. Claude was grave and quiet. Young Lecocq was to bring in a farm dress for him, and it was hoped he would pass for a farm lad going down with apples and pears to be shipped on the coast, and that Jeannette might be concealed within the load. Presently they heard the wheels.

Claude went out and opened the great doorway, so that the cart might be driven in. It was still so early that few people were about in the streets, and Lecocq

himself was well known. He had taken the precaution of bringing a boy with him of about Claude's age, who would stay at the house until he called for him that evening, so as to avoid suspicion as much as possible. Still, at the best, how much must be risked, how many fears surrounded the attempt! It seemed to Dr. Maury that he could have borne all if only he might have been near his child, but to send her forth, and to know nothing of what befell, was a trial almost beyond his strength. And he was obliged to keep up an appearance of playfulness with Jeannette at the very time when his heart was bursting.

Claude was dressed in his clothes, and young Lecocq was anxious to be gone, as it would be easier to pass the gate at a time when others were flocking out than later when there would be fewer to question. Little Jeanne did not cry, but she clung to her father. He lifted her in his arms.

"Be reasonable, my treasure. Do exactly what Claude and our good Lecocq bid thee. Father will come as soon as ever he can."

Then they all kissed her, Barbe sobbing so that Claude suddenly hustled her into a corner. Her father himself made Jeannette lie down in the cart, and placed some sticks so that the full weight of the apples should not come upon her. Still it was a terribly

cramped and uncomfortable position, as she soon began to feel.

"But I shall not weep, father," she said bravely.  
"And I shall think of the Good Shepherd."

"Ah, my Jeanne," he said, with a cry he could not restrain, "may He bring us together again!"

She was quite covered now. As soon as they were out of the town Lecocq would arrange something less suffocating, but for the present no precautions could be too great, and do what they would the hazards remained excessive. No last adieu was possible; the door was opened, the cart rumbled out into the *place*—into what danger! They might not even run out and follow it with loving eyes, for fear of exciting suspicion; Marie quickly closed the doors, and drew her sisters away, for Dr. Maury had staggered to the wall, and his sorrow was too deep for their comforting.

All dreams of the pleasures of flight in disguise had been quickly shaken out of little Jeanne's head before she had long bumped along over the rough pavement with the heavy weight pressing upon her so that it really required all her fortitude not to cry out. They had been obliged to put more apples than were required actually to cover her, in order to allow for this very bumping, and even now Lecocq was constantly glancing into the cart to see that nothing of the child was visible,

and that she was not betraying herself by any movement. He said to Claude that it was hard upon such a little creature, and that he was sure Fulgence would never have remained so still, but he was more anxious than he liked to confess about the getting out at the gate, where the loads were often prodded to make sure nothing was concealed in them. It was for this reason that they had fixed on apples instead of vegetables, as they were less likely to be suspected and more difficult to penetrate.

Lecocq was particularly anxious to pass through the gate in company with one or two others, and managed by a little contrivance to get behind a waggon of straw, but to his great annoyance the waggon pulled up at a side street, and he was left to go on alone. Claude's heart beat fast as the cart stopped at the gate, and two or three men came leisurely out.

"What have we here?" said one, leaning against the cart. "Apples? And for where?"

"We are sending down a few cartloads for shipment, monsieur," said Lecocq.

"For shipment, *hein?* Too many good things go out of the country already," grumbled his questioner. "Nothing else?"

He raised the iron bar he held in his hand, when Claude with a cry of pretended pain fell forward on his hands and knees.

"What ails the young blockhead, then?" said the man, turning round amazed.

"He is subject to fits, monsieur," said Lecocq, coolly. "Come, up with thee, thou young idiot, and give over this nonsense, or we shall be all day on the road."

"He looks pale," said another, more compassionately. "Half-starved, I dare say. Well, pass on with your apples, but let me first pick out the juiciest."

He took a long time over his selection, keeping Lecocq in mortal fright, though he talked to his horses, and tried to conceal his uneasiness lest Jeannette should stir. They were at last suffered to proceed, and once through the gate the danger was so far lessened that they were able to give the poor child more breathing space, and Claude could even pass in his hand for her to clasp, which seemed to give her infinite comfort, and though from the noise and position it was difficult for her to hear them speak, she could now and then get a peep at their faces, and the air revived her.

The journey was not above nine or ten miles in length. Lecocq turned in his mind whether he might not let the child come boldly out, and risk any questions when they had got half-way. He finally, however, decided that it was better she should remain where she was, for already there were rumours that the coast was

very closely watched, both soldiers and ships being ordered to search for and arrest any Huguenots who might attempt flight, who were indeed already attempting it in every direction.

Once Claude very nearly got them into trouble by taking an overbearing tone with a man who pressed up to them and was disposed to be insolent. Lecocq rated him soundly before the man, and afterwards impressed civility upon him, Claude frankly acknowledging that he had been in the wrong.

"But the chattering pye set my blood on the boil," he said, by way of excuse.

"Keep it at a lower temperature, Monsieur Claude," said Lecocq, drily. "'Twill work there more safely, believe me. Now, if I am not wrong, this is the road. And glad enough shall I be when we can take our poor little demoiselle out of her weary hiding-place. I hope your man will do his part. I have heard of him as a sulky old *lourdaud*. But in these days we must put up with strange friends. My mother thinks we may all be driven out of the farm ourselves. How goes it with her now?"

"She is asleep," said Claude, leaning over. And indeed, in spite of her hard bed and rough joltings, poor little Jeannette, tired out with sorrow and fatigue, was sleeping as soundly in her bed of apples as in

her own snug little recess at home. What awoke her was the cart coming to a sudden standstill, and she called out "Father, father!" in momentary forgetfulness and alarm.

"Hush, hush, dear Jeanne! do not be frightened," said Claude, hastening to her side. "We shall get thee out now in a very little time, I hope. Dost thou hear the break of the waves? But lie quite still, like a brave treasure as thou art. I am going to speak to a man close by, and will come back in a moment."

Claude was indeed in no little perplexity.

One or two cottages were near, and though he had been told which was André Dumoulin's, it was impossible to say which of the sailors who were lounging about might be the owner. This part of the business, moreover, Lecocq absolutely declined, saying he knew nothing about it and should only bungle. Claude went hesitatingly towards the group, warned by Lecocq to keep up his character of farm-lad.

"Is one of you messieurs called Dumoulin?" he asked, awkwardly.

The men turned round and eyed him. Then a sailor lad about his own age said, with a laugh, "Any fool can ask questions, but he may have to wait before he gets an answer."

Claude had much ado to keep his temper, but he just managed it.

"Well, my master heard he was in want of a cargo of apples," he said.

"Then your master may go and pull the ears of those who told him the tale," growled a shaggy-looking man, turning round and looking Claude up and down. "Come, be off, we want none of you youngsters here."

"That is friend Dumoulin," thought Claude. Aloud he said, "That's a pity, for they're as fine apples as you could ever see. However——," and turning away as if dismissed he began to whistle the air which Dr. Maury had learnt from Chamier.

There was no movement among the sailors, but presently Dumoulin said, giving himself a shake like a great dog,

"After all, a few apples would do no harm."

"And the *Trois Sœurs* is not over-loaded," added another, who was smoking.

"One may as well go and have a look at them."

"I'll go with you, André," said a keen-faced little man, with eagerness.

"You'll stop here, if you please," grumbled Dumoulin, looking angrily at him. "I make my bargains by myself—no offence to any other."

Claude, whose heart had sunk within him at every

step when he found that his whistling produced no effect, and that he was returning unaccompanied to the cart, looked despairingly round just before he reached it, and with a spring of intense relief saw Dumoulin's big figure strolling slowly up towards them. He gave a hasty word to Lecocq, and when the sailor reached the cart was busily employed in settling the high collar of the nearest horse, all the while whistling his tune with great animation.

"You seem mighty merry," said Dumoulin, in his surly tone. "Where may you have picked up that pipe which runs in your head?"

"From one Maître Chamier," said Claude, stopping and looking in his face. "It was he, you must know, who sent us here, thinking you had room for a cargo."

"And what have you got in your cart? Something better than apples, unless I am out of my reckoning," said the sailor, standing in such a manner as to command a view of the group of men he had just quitted, and speaking more quickly.

Young Lecocq beckoned to him without a word, and raised a piece of stuff which he had thrown over little Jeanne. She looked from one to the other with startled eyes.

"Huguenot?" said Dumoulin, briefly.

Lecocq nodded.

"And to be got on board a vessel?"

"With young Monsieur Claude," said Lecocq, pointing to the pretended farm-lad.

"Hum. Yesterday I could have done it easily. To-morrow I believe it will be impossible. For to-day we must consider. There is a prying little knave down there whom we suspect of being sent here on the look out, and he will have to be thrown off the scent. However, you must understand I shall do all I can for Chamier. What is most unfortunate is that you cannot drive the cart nearer to my place."

"The others are coming this way!" exclaimed Claude, turning round in alarm.

"Did you think I did not see them!" said Dumoulin with a grin. "Yes, my young sir, you may not be the worse for a word of advice from an old sailor. Keep your eyes open, your head cool, and your wits ready. Throw the cloth over the little creature, and scatter that bundle of straw on the top." Then he shouted at the top of his voice, "Hey, Nicolas, Pierre! Bring up one or two of the biggest baskets with you."

This quickened their movements, and the little man, who had been doubtful of his reception, arrived first, full of curiosity.

"Hast thou bought the apples? Are they fine? Let me have a look."

"Oh, ay, fine enough," growled Dumoulin. "That's my business."

"What's under the straw ? Pears, *hein* ? Let us see."

But at a little signal from Dumoulin two or three sailors had closed in solidly to look at the apples, and push as he would he could not get beyond their elbows. And all the while poor little Jeanne lay quaking and trembling, hearing the rough, deep voices, and only vaguely comprehending that she must lie quite still—for father's sake—although she could hardly breathe. Dumoulin, who wanted to get rid of the little man, who at any rate was too curious to be safely trusted, began to find fault with the baskets they had brought. He said, kicking one—

"Who, then, will buy apples that stink of fish ? Nicolas, thou art an ass ! Here, Raboteau, inside my door there is one that is something like ; fetch it for me, like a good comrade."

The little man hesitated, but he had often wished to get into Dumoulin's cottage ; and the errand would not take him long. The instant he had gone, André pulled off the straw and cloth.

"Now, my little lady," he said, lifting her tenderly, "no one will harm you ; we are going to carry you to my house in this basket, and there is not a moment to lose."

"Claude!" cried the poor child, piteously.

"Ah, that is right; hold her hand, young sir, while we fill in the basket with apples. It's well she is light, and the basket strong. Is that little scoundrel coming? Ah, ha, it has all fallen out as I hoped—my wife has hold of him," said the sailor, returning to his work with a satisfied grin.

And indeed the sounds which reached them spoke ill for little Raboteau's errand. For Mère Dumoulin, whose tongue had become a proverb in all the country round, had pounced upon him as he was stealing in at the door, and demanding an immediate account of his business there, without allowing him an instant of time in which to give it, was rating him at the highest pitch of her voice. Nor could he escape, for she was determined, if by force of arms, to keep him, and as he was only half her size, the situation was ludicrous. Dumoulin appreciated it to the full. "She is a clever woman, my wife," he remarked. "A tongue is something when it does one a good turn like this. There, my little lady, we will get you in in no time. Throw the cloth over her head again; and now, Nicolas, thou and I have got this basket to carry, and we will have no prying eyes coming to peep at the apples."

Claude and a second man went before with another load. Lecocq remained with the cart, and set to work

to give his good horses a feed, as they were to get back to Caen that night. Raboteau, having made his escape from his tormentor, came to meet Dumoulin, with a discomfited air.

"You can send another after your baskets next time," he said, in an affronted tone. "One would suppose I had been a brigand going to break into the house! Here, do you want a hand?"

"No, no, Raboteau," said Nicolas, chuckling. "Here comes Mère Dumoulin to help us. You and she can fetch another from the cart, if you will wait for her."

But Raboteau had no mind for another encounter. He hurried off, looking over his shoulder more than once, but when he saw she had turned with the men, branched off to the cart, where it was evident he would try to worm something out of Lecocq.

"Let him!" cried Claude confidently. "He will only hear what will turn him off the scent."

"Thou wilt have to give him another fright, old Marthe," said Dumoulin. "We must get the cart off without his knowing that the boy is missing."

When poor little Jeanne was lifted out of the basket and set on the floor of the fisherman's cottage, she was so stiff and cramped in all her limbs that she would have dropped if Claude had not caught her in his arms, and then she clung to him, not actually crying, but

giving one or two quick sobs, which she could not keep back, though she tried hard to be brave. The French love of children is always extreme, and the men were greatly touched by the story which Claude told them briefly, and by the little creature who stood in their midst, so fair and slender, that she looked as if a hand might crush her.

"And yet she has a brave heart, the little jewel," said Mère Dumoulin in her strong deep voice. "See here, my demoiselle, you need not fear us, for there is not one who would not sooner die than give you up, though they look rough and terrifying."

Jeannette, who had hidden her face, looked up.

"I am not afraid," she said, simply. "I was only thinking of my father."

"And he shall have thee safe," said Nicolas, passing his hand across his eyes. "Say, then, *Père* Dumoulin, wilt thou put them on board the *Trois Sœurs* to-night, or wait for to-morrow?"

"It must be to-night," said Dumoulin uneasily. "They might have better accommodation to-morrow, but I have had tidings," and he made the sign with his hand which implied danger.

"And how to get her on board? The lad might have my boy's clothes."

"I can pay for them," said Claude eagerly.

"Well, well, then there's no difficulty," said Pierre, who had made this suggestion.

Meanwhile, Mère Dumoulin was bustling about, getting something to eat. Beans stewed in oil were not very appetising, but there was fresh milk, and Jeannette had her rolls in her pocket, so that she and Claude did not fare badly, and it gave infinite satisfaction to their entertainers to see the colour coming back to her cheeks, and to hear her gay laugh when Pierre's lad had fetched his clothes, and Claude came forth dressed in them. Old Marthe, as her husband called her, insisted upon taking the child into the inner room, and settling her on the bed to rest, as her day's fatigues were not ended. And the question which troubled them all was how to get her safely on board the vessel, which was lading in a little harbour about a quarter of a mile or less off, for there were others about whom they suspected as much as Raboteau, although he seemed the most actively inquisitive.

Dumoulin tied Claude's clothes up in a bundle, and took them out to the cart with a horn tankard full of cider, and some of the beans aforesaid. He found that the little man had plied Lecocq with endless questions, but the young fellow was confident that he had let out nothing.

"Now I shall be off," he said. "And what shall I

say to the child's father ? Can you help him and the other children?"

"Tell him I will put his child on board a boat bound for Plymouth to-night : that the soldiers will be here to-morrow, and he had better try another part. But look you—wait another hour before you start, and settle these clothes at the bottom of the cart, to look like the lad sleeping. That little reptile will be at you again, you'll see."

Lecocq waited, as he had promised, and then amused himself by disposing the clothes as Dumoulin suggested, stuffing them with straw. He started, however, without hearing anything of little Raboteau, and thought he had got fairly off, when he saw his face peering over a hedge, which he proceeded to scramble down.

"Wait a moment, wait a moment," he cried ; "I am coming your way, and you can give me a lift. Where's the boy ? Left behind ?"

Lecocq answered by giving his horses a cut, which made them start forward with a plunge.

"Can't you see !" he shouted, pointing into the cart. "Good evening to you, monsieur ; I've no time to stop."

Raboteau ran after him in vain, then, muttering an oath, and sure that he had been duped, he hurried back towards the coast. But there a woman's wits had been at work.

How was Jeannette to get on board the *Trois Sœurs*? The master had been warned, and would be ready. Nicolas was in favour of waiting till dark and chancing a good deal, with the hope she might slip in unnoticed. Dumoulin wanted to smuggle her on board at the time when Raboteau was drawn off, as he felt sure he would be, by the cart. His wife in her deep voice, solved the difficulty.

"Put her into one of the apple-barrels, and carry her down," she said, pointing to a couple of casks which were standing by. Dumoulin slapped his leg triumphantly.

"Old Marthe against you all!" he said. "'Tis hard on her, too, but better than being seized. Do thou go presently, wife, and tell her. As soon as the cart starts, we start."

Poor little Jeannette! The black hard barrel seemed the worst of all. Only Claude's persuasions, and her father's last words, that she was to do all he told her, could have induced her to consent. Mère Dumoulin kissed her heartily, and Claude cheered her by assuring her it was the last imprisonment, and then she stepped in and lay down with a face of great unwillingness, and Dumoulin and Nicolas took the cask between them as they had taken the basket, and went off. The other men crowded round Claude—who was to pass as a

young nephew of Pierre's if any questions were asked—and kept him in their midst. But whether from the absence of Raboteau, or any other reason, nothing untoward occurred. The men on board the fishing-smack were all friendly, and assured Dumoulin that no one should come on board. Claude promised them a certain sum for delivering them at Plymouth, though he would have rather gone to some port nearer London; a little more freight, actually consisting of apples, was hurriedly taken in, and they weighed anchor, hoisted their sail, and got out of the little harbour.

The afternoon was calm and gray. The sky was gray; the cliffs gray, one shade darker; the sea gray, darker still. Overhead there was a faint daylight moon just showing itself. Nicolas nudged Dumoulin, who was standing considering.

“What dost thou say to the weather?”

“Might be better and might be worse,” answered the sailor briefly.

A little man came running down, breathless.

“Eh, eh, what has happened? What are you all looking at?”

“At the *Trois Sœurs*, Raboteau,” said Dumoulin, pointing. “Why wert thou not here to help the apples on board? My wife has been asking after thee.”

## CHAPTER XI.

THE FATE OF THE *TROIS SŒURS*.

WHEN once they were safely out from the land, Jeannette was no longer obliged to be concealed, and came with Claude to the place which was pointed out to them at the stern of the boat, where they were out of the way. A certain watchfulness was of course still necessary, as they might be overhauled by one of the king's ships, and in that case Jeannette would have to be hidden once more among the apples. But the sailors were pretty confident that no such vessels were about, and there would, at any rate, always be time for the hiding, so she was suffered to be with Claude in the stern. The *Trois Sœurs* was a clumsy, half-decked fishing boat, and went creaking and lumbering through the water, as if every plank in her were crying out at the strain ; but to Jeanne it was a wonderful new world into which she had entered, and all her sorrows were for the time swallowed up in wonder and delight. The sea was rather ruffled than rough, and the waves lapped up against the thick bows, and rolled off whitened by the shock. It was all gray-looking, as has been said, except that a reddish lurid light began to burn in the west ;

but there is nothing more beautiful in nature than those soft and tender harmonies of gray, against which every now and then comes the white flash of a sea-bird's wing.

Jeannette's tongue had been silent enough all day to want a little use now, and Claude was in high spirits at the success of their plans so far, and at the charge which was laid on him. The conversation, therefore, was carried on briskly.

"How many men are there here, Claude? And are they good men?"

"I hope so, *petite*. There are no more than four, and that big one is the master."

"I am so glad to get out of the jolting, and the apples. I don't think I shall ever want to eat another apple. But the cask! Oh, it was dreadful, dreadful! Say then, Claude, will not Grande Barbe think we have had adventures, when we tell her! When will they come, all of them? To-morrow, perhaps?"

"Soon, at any rate, I hope. I shall take care of thee, Jeannette."

"Yes, of course. Oh, I am not afraid with you. And I was quite brave, I did not cry, except just a little, when nobody saw me. But you sent father a hundred kisses by Alain Lecocq, did you not? And I

did so wish to have patted the horses. It was one of those I rode that day. Do I look like Fulgence now that I have on her clothes?—but I forgot, you never saw Fulgence. I wish she could have come, too, then she might have worn *my* clothes, and no one would have known her."

"Art thou cold? See, I shall wrap this sail round thee. Perhaps if we wave, André and his wife will still see us. But we are going away fast."

"Yes, to England, where they do not hate the Huguenots. What makes them hate us in our France?"

"They have another religion there, and do not like that we should be different. And they listen to the evil stories which bad men tell about us," said Claude, feeling as if the child's innocent question were hard to answer, and brought with it a train of bitter thoughts. For they were the shores of his own country which were growing indistinct behind them, and it was hard to be cast forth from it, an exile.

The wind, although in their favour, was freshening very rapidly. Jeannette was enchanted with the rush and vigour of the waves, liked even the shiver which passed through the old boat, when one struck her more strongly than the rest, liked to see the red sail swelling out, and to hear the creak of the cordage, and to feel the salt spray dash against her face. But as the dusk

crept on, and the shores had faded behind them into an indistinct and murky line, Claude thought the sailors showed signs of uneasiness. The *Trois Sœurs*, indeed, was too old and clumsy to be safely counted upon in case of a gale springing up ; she did not answer quickly to her helm, and was apt to lie like a log in the trough of a great wave. Nevertheless it might be hoped that no actual gale was rising.

Jeanne's position, however, soon became too much exposed for her to stay there. The water dashed over so wildly that Claude, sorely against her will, insisted upon carrying her into shelter, and took her into the little hole, scarcely to be called a cabin, where she was at least protected from the driving spray. The fishermen were too much occupied with their work to pay any attention to their two charges ; and down there, in the darkness, only lit by a tiny wick floating in oil, with an all-pervading smell of fish and tar, with the shouts of the sailors passing incessantly from one to the other, and the heavy blows of the waves as they struck the old vessel, Jeannette's bravery almost deserted her. She clung sobbing to Claude, who was much distressed at his inability to soothe her, and at her piteous longing for her father ; while he found it difficult to keep her unhurt by the rolling of the old vessel. When at last she sobbed out that he was to sing her a Psalm, there

came a certain comfort that what was not permitted in their own homes, was here free to them, and with this the thought of the protecting Arm which was surely about them, though the waters might rage and swell.

The Scottish metrical version of the Psalms represents better than any other the rugged quaintness and vigour of the Psalms versified by Clément Marot, which were so dear to the Huguenots, and as their singing made up a large part of their worship, tune and words were quite familiar to Claude, and he sang the seventy-ninth and eightieth, until Jeannette's sobs were hushed. Then she said—

“Now another. ‘The Lord’s my Shepherd, I’ll not want.’ I told father I should think of the Good Shepherd.”

So Claude sang the beautiful comforting words which have cheered so many souls in the valley of the shadow of death, and which the young pastor, Majal, sang as he and his companions went to their execution at Montpellier. Before he had come to the last words, Jeanne was asleep in his arms.

That was a strange night for the boy. He dared not put her down, for the rolling was so violent that, as it was, it was all he could do to keep both himself and her from being flung from one side to the other. Happily he was not ill, but there was something so repugnant to

his daring nature in sitting cooped up in the darkness, expecting he did not know what, and not able to find out or face what danger they were in, that only for little Jeanne's sake, and out of gratitude to her father, could he have resisted the impulse to rush out and see what was going on.

The hours of that night were interminable. No one came near them, the little lamp flickered as if it must soon go out, and leave them in unbroken darkness. The roar and hurly-burly, the creaking and shouting seemed still to increase. Death might be very near, and to meet it shut up in a hole, without even a struggle for life, was very hard. Yet, "The Lord's my Shepherd, I'll not want," came now and again like the "Peace, be still," of the same Lord; and it was strange how the peace seemed mightier than the wild storm. Claude had often felt impatient at his father's gentle teaching; his mother's nature was nearer his own, though hers was tempered by strong and intense faith; but at this hour those teachings rose again and again in his heart, and gained a power which he had never dreamed of connecting with them before. In the face of great realities, his feverish impatience became so petty! Here he felt as never before how the Lord, Who holdeth the waters in the hollow of His hand, is indeed the Great King above all the earth. If it

seemed that wrong and persecution triumphed, it could not really be so, it was but for a time—for a trial; and the words they had written in the buried Bible came back to his mind: "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." How little had he trusted, how much had he fretted! But from this time he felt as if it could not be quite the same again.

And still the weary night dragged on its long hours, and he knew nothing of what position they were in. It all sounded much the same. Jeannette yet slept, though every now and then she had stirred, called "*Mon père!*" or opened her eyes, and clung, half-unconscious, still to Claude. He had no means of guessing at the time, and was feeling numbed and tired, so that every now and then he dropped into a half-doze himself, and found bewildering dreams floating through his head.

It was out of one of these that he was startled by the cranky door being burst open, and a sailor rushing into the cabin, bringing with him a whirl of wind which at once extinguished the little lamp.

"Are you here, young sir?" he shouted excitedly. "There is great danger; you must come up at once!" and he was gone, before a question could be asked.

Claude sprang to his feet, holding Jeanne still tightly in his arms, and staggered out into the gray dawn. It

had but just broken, and everything was indistinct with mist and driving rain. But even to him the danger was evident, for close before them something besides the dawn had grown out of the darkness, a dark high line of cliffs. How they had got to that spot, what error in their reckoning, or overpowering force of the storm was driving them right upon this wall, there was no time to ask. The men were all shouting, gesticulating, letting down the anchor as a last hope. It would not hold. Then there was a cry from the master to hoist another sail, with the hope of sweeping past the rocks and grounding in a less terrible place. But it was too late. It seemed to Claude as if scarcely a minute had passed before a violent shock showed that the *Trois Sœurs* had struck heavily. The master rushed up to him, pale as death.

“We are lost, monsieur!” he cried. “We shall go down in five minutes. The boat has already been swept away!”

“Is there no hope?” asked Claude, also pale. “The land is so near.”

“Yes, but what land! And this little creature! We must lash her to a spar.”

Claude could swim well, though he had never been in such a stormy sea. Now he eyed the distance to the shore. It looked hopeless. Jeannette was

trembling violently, and her eyes were dilated, but she was quite passive, even when the master and Claude had bound her to a plank. Two of the fishermen had already leapt into the sea, one was on his knees at the stern.

“I shall remain in the old boat and take my chance,” said the master, speaking more calmly. “This is a bad business for us all. Shall you wait or try the swimming ?”

“Must the boat sink ?”

“Listen ! you can hear the water pouring in. She is settling already.”

Claude tied his handkerchief across the child’s eyes, and kissed her on both cheeks.

“Think always of the Good Shepherd, *petite*,” he said, and then, asking the master to lower the plank with its burden on that side of the vessel where she a little broke the force of the waves, he plunged into the wild tumult of the waters.

His first feeling was that he was lost. The rush and whirl, the way in which he was flung backwards and forwards against the ship out into the hurly-burly, the bewildering roar in his ears, the utter powerlessness which benumbed him, almost deprived him of consciousness. He had hardly regained it, when he saw in the water the plank with its burden, and his heart went up in a wild cry for help.

He had hold of it, however—how, he never knew—and then began a fight, a struggle of which no one would have doubted the result. To have saved himself on such a coast, in such a sea, seemed all but impossible ; but to cling to this frail plank, to guide it blindly towards some possible haven, to escape being battered upon the rocks, was a task altogether beyond his power, almost, it might be said, beyond the power of mortal man.

Nevertheless, by an almost superhuman tenacity, he had clung to it, and borne by the mighty in-rush of the sea itself was near the base of the cliffs which rose up like a horrible barrier before despairing men. It is true he hardly knew he was so near, or how long he had been battling with the fierce waters, but there he was, and still he had hold of the plank. Then, as if the waves would not suffer their prey to be snatched from them, as if they meant to mock his puny strength, it seemed to him as if a greater force overtook him, as if the plank were wrenched from his grasp, and he tossed, battered, sported with, and at last flung exhausted towards the shore. He was conscious of feeling the ground beneath him, and calling together all the strength he could command, made a desperate effort, was flung again, and managed finally to crawl out of the reach of the waves, which had carried him to a small inlet between the cliffs.

There, on face and hands, he lay, all but unconscious, and quite unable to realise that though he was saved he was saved alone. Gradually, as his senses struggled back, this fact woke up with it, and he started up with a groan, and looked wildly out to sea.

Nothing. The *Trois Sœurs*, with her living freight, had gone down. Spars and broken bits were tossing about, but no sign of human life broke the gray and angry waters, on which by this time the daylight had strengthened. Round about were limestone cliffs, against which the wind and rain were driving, and the pebbly inlet on which he had been flung, pierced the cliffs, and ran back a little way, as if it might have been a water channel. But all this he scarcely took in; his one agonising thought was of little Jeanne.

He leaped on a rock and stared outwards. Nothing. He clambered a little way up the steep and slippery cliff. Nothing still. He cried out in the bitter anguish of his heart, "Jeanne, Jeanne!" and then held his breath to listen, as if above all the roar and raging of the waters he could hear her cry answering back, "Claude, Claude, where are you?" Silence. Still nothing.

In his despair he was almost ready to fling himself again into the sea, for what, he thought, did his own life matter, and how could he ever face Dr. Maury

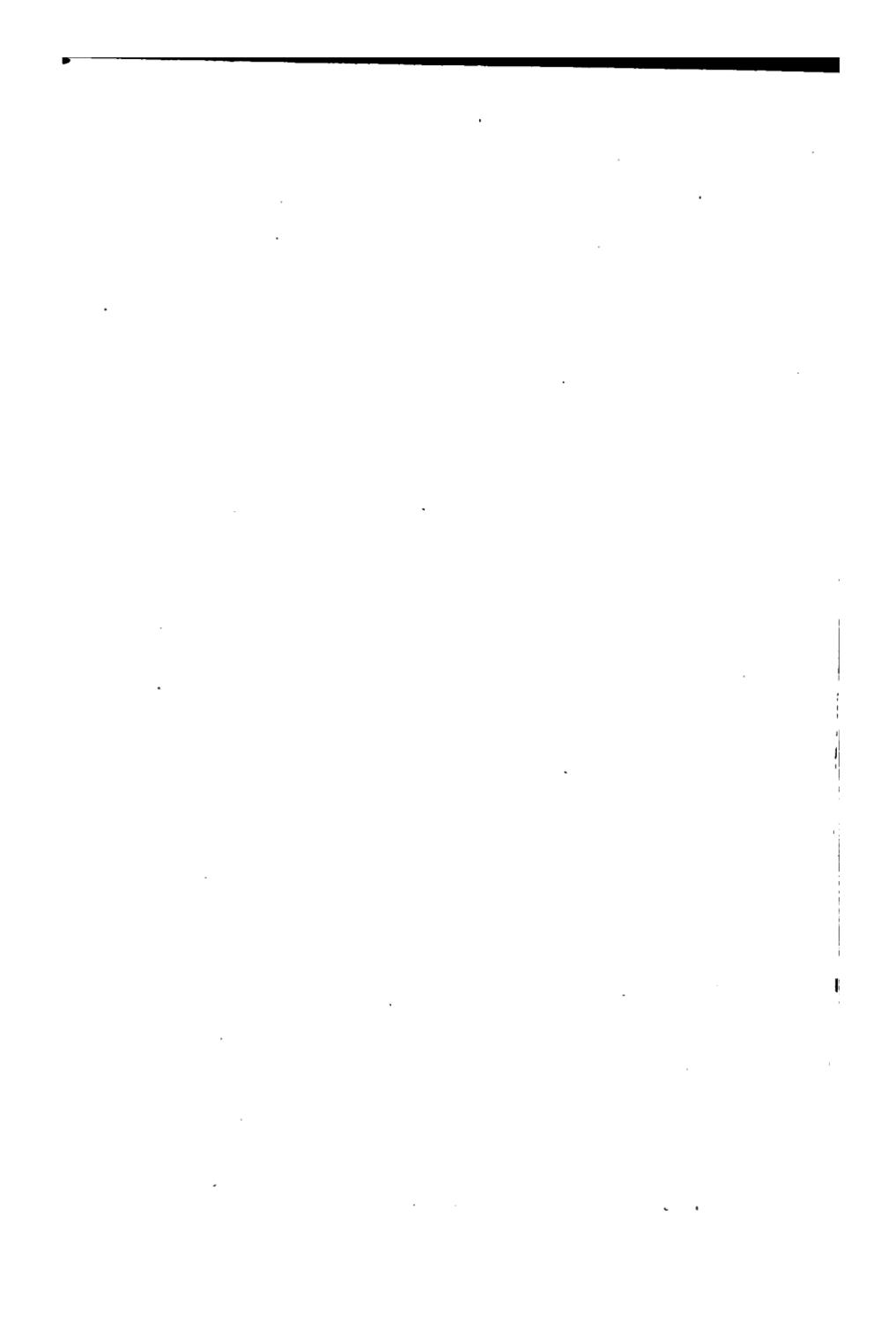
without his child? But a Merciful Hand kept him from this sin, and he only stood staring out as if his eyes would force the waters to give up their secrets.

What was that?

It seemed to him—but he was so distraught and bewildered that he could not separate fancy from reality—that through the tossing waves he had caught sight of something white. And he wondered—again in the same confused way—whether it were not the hand-kerchief which he had bound across the child's eyes. Once the idea, however wild, had touched his brain, but one thing remained to be done. He must plunge again into the waters, and bring what he saw more clearly before him. This time he stripped off his coat, and unfastened the Bible and the little bag of money which had been concealed round his waist; then he dashed in.

He caught sight of the object once more, and hope began to revive strongly. Bits of the wreck went floating past, more than one being flung where he had been flung on the little beach; he swam out bravely, though often beaten back. Presently he saw the plank quite clearly, caught at it, clutched it, and turned with a thrill of intense gratitude in his heart towards the shore.

Jeannette it was, lying as she had been bound upon





"Claude took her in his arms, and carried her up towards the opening in the cliff."—Page 169.

the plank ; but when he had struggled up out of the reach of the waves, when he had unfastened the cords, and taken off the handkerchief, and chafed the limp cold hands, he began to feel all the past anguish coming back. For though he had saved her, was it not too late ? She was still and white as death.

He took her in his arms and carried her up towards the opening in the cliff, looking round to see where he could best shelter her from the cold rain, which the wind drove in violent swoops. Happily he soon saw that several small caves pierced the cliff, and choosing one into which no rain was beating, he made a bed of dry sea-weed, and gathered together a heap of the same stuff for a fire, rubbing sticks together to get his light.

How long she remained in this condition he never knew : it was all in vain that he rubbed her limbs, and tried to bring back a little warmth. Still her eyes were closed, and no breath fluttered through the blue lips. Yet this time he never despaired. It seemed to him that she had been given back to him in such a wonderful manner that he would not believe it was only that he might see for himself that she was dead. He brought her yet nearer to the fire ; he heated some great pebbles which lay about, and placed them at her feet,

longing that he could have had a little brandy to force between her lips. And presently he was sure there was a little, trembling sigh. Trembling himself, he redoubled all his efforts, and she opened her eyes and gazed at him for a moment, then closed them again, and seemed scarcely more life-like than before.

Claude now resolved what to do. He laid her down gently on the sea-weed, pressed the fire closely together, and determined to go out, climb the cliff, and bring the help which was so much wanted. He hesitated whether he would carry her in his arms, but his struggle with the waves had greatly exhausted him, and he dared not take her out in the cold, driving rain. It was better to leave her where she was, and to come back as quickly as he could with assistance. And yet it cost him a sharp pang to go away.

He found the opening in the cliffs formed a little gully, grassy and dotted with gorse bushes. There was no difficulty in clambering along it, but it seemed to stretch and wind for a long way, and to be as desolate as if no human creature lived within miles of the spot. When he emerged at length on the top of the heights, his heart sank to see the desolation and stillness all round. The rain, too, blurred the nearer outlines, and

hid the more distant view altogether, and he could trace no sign of habitation, and half hesitated whether not to return at once, and trust to his own efforts. Yet he believed more was necessary, and pressed blindly on, finding himself on wild high land, and often brought up short, and forced to go round. The time it took was really long, and when at last he reached a cottage, no one was in it but an old deaf woman, who would not attempt to understand his signs, and only shook her head feebly in answer to all his entreating looks. He reached a farm at length where they came out, and crowded round him in wonder, unable, of course, to comprehend a word he said, and with none of the French quickness which would have quickly made out his story.

By and by, however, it began to dawn upon them, and by help of a little girl he made them somehow understand that a child's dry things were needed, and with more difficulty got a little brandy, and two of the men to set off with him. As he could not explain where they must go, he could only retrace his own steps, thus doubtless losing more time. At last, however, they got to the gully, and Claude, dashing into the cave, stood as if turned to stone. There was no Jeanne. Then he made sure she must be somewhere outside: they searched everywhere, in vain. His belt and his Bible

lay where he had thrown them, and something else there was, lying on the rocks, which the retreating tide had left uncovered—something to which the men called his attention, and from which he shrank back in horror—the body of one of the fishermen belonging to the *Trois Sœurs*: but no Jeanne.

## CHAPTER XII.

## CLÉMENTINE'S RESOLVE.

IT will easily be imagined in what a state of anxiety Dr. Maury remained on that day when he had sent forth his little Jeanne, and could only wait helplessly, hoping for and yet fearing the news which might reach him. He had, besides, another quite unexpected form of trouble.

He had made up his mind to attempt his own flight with the three children on the morrow. It would however depend on what information Lecocq brought back, whether they should follow Jeannette's track or attempt to cross into Switzerland. Both the coast and the Netherlands were much in favour with those who fled, and it was said that a very close watch was kept for fugitives. Long before, in face of the constantly-approaching troubles, the Huguenots had furnished themselves with maps of what might prove their safest routes, in which the cross paths and less frequented roads were carefully marked, as well as houses, whether belonging to Huguenots or to friendly Roman Catholics, where guides or shelter might be procured. On their way into Switzerland Dr. Maury would pass close to his

own birth-place, and his knowledge of the country and the assurance he felt of finding friends disposed him to make the attempt, unless Lecocq reported favourably of the coast.

For this speedy departure, last preparations were of course necessary. He had, too, sick people to visit, whom it wrung his kind heart to leave. Had it been only his own safety which was in question he would have remained at all risks, but the girls, especially after Clémentine's escapade of the day before, would certainly be taken from him, and he felt as if care for their safety had now become his first duty.

He would not even tell Marie what was in his mind before he returned to the house which he left with many misgivings as to the children's prudence, absolutely forbidding them to open the door to any comers, or even to himself until he had given a particular signal.

One of his pressing cares was to see the pastor Leblanc, who was concealed in a house a little out of Caen, where they were obliged to take the closest precautions for his safety, especially as he was disposed to brave dangers only too devotedly. What he braved was death, the penalty for any pastors who remained in the country after fifteen days had expired, and yet Dr. Maury felt that with a man of his mould death itself would weigh as nothing in comparison with the joy of

ministering to his persecuted people, and could not urge him to fly.

The physician hurried home at last, knowing that it was impossible for Lecocq to have arrived, yet when he was admitted by Marie, and saw her pale and in tears, he felt as if his child must be lost to him. He caught the girl by the wrist, his dry lips could hardly frame the words—

“ My child ? ”

“ Monsieur, we know nothing,” said Marie, eagerly ; and true to her mission as comforter she added, “ if Lecocq had been turned back we should have heard by this time.”

“ My poor Marie, there is then some other trouble ? ”

“ Alas, monsieur, I scarcely dare tell you.”

“ Come into my room,” said Dr. Maury, drawing her in. It seemed to him as if he could bear anything that had not to do with Jeanne, and yet his heart reproached him. “ Let us see. Have you had a visit from M. de Guillemand ? ” And seeing he was right in his conjecture his face darkened as he said, “ Why was he admitted ? ”

“ Clémentine saw him,” stammered Marie, “ and—— ”

“ And opened the door against my express orders ? ”

“ Monsieur, what he said to her yesterday has had a great effect, she has thought of little else since. And,

indeed, it seemed as if he were resolved to enter, for he brought the curé with him, and another man."

"And you are still here!" said Dr. Maury, turning pale. "Did they examine you?"

"Yes," said Marie, crying quietly. "And they wanted to take us, but Clémentine said she would not go until to-morrow. She did say that, monsieur, at all events. And I think they wished so much to get one of my father's children to join them willingly that they consented."

"Willingly? Do you mean that she will abjure?"

"Oh, monsieur," cried Marie, bursting into bitter sobs, "that is the terrible part. She says she has her free choice, and that no one can compel her, and that we are all unkind, and treat her like a baby! What will my father and mother say?"

"It must be some childish fancy, nothing more," said Dr. Maury, incredulously. "That meek little creature! Send her to me at once."

But he could extract nothing from Clémentine more satisfactory than Marie had told him. M. de Guillemand was very kind, she said, and had explained a great deal which she had never heard before, and he had told her she had a right to do exactly what she pleased, whatever might be said. It was very evident that M. de Guillemand's malice against the pastor made him

aware that no pang would be so sharp as that of his children's renouncing their religion, and his leaving them unmolested for another day seemed to be due to Clémentine's declaring that she would not go away until Dr. Maury was told, a sign of grace for which he was obliged to be thankful, and perhaps to the hope that Marie and Barbe would follow their sister's example when they had time to think over the alternative, close confinement in a convent. Clémentine was to go to the convent also, but it was to be in a very different position, and since the curé had expatiated upon the indulgences and companions she would meet with there, she was all eagerness to try her new life.

Dr. Maury found himself absolutely disregarded. When he appealed to her love for father and mother, Clémentine returned that they had been left to their own fate, and that there was very little chance of their rejoining them. Besides she was quite sure her father and mother were prejudiced against the religion of their country, and did not understand what had been explained to her. She did not trouble herself to listen to Dr. Maury's arguments, yawning and looking about her, and evidently enjoying rebellion as the first fruits of the liberty she wished for.

Finally he told her what he intended to do the next day, and implored her to come with them, and pause at

any rate while there was a chance of escape, before irrevocably deciding. But this evidently alarmed her. She declared that she would not leave; that M. de Guillemard had promised to come for them on the morrow, and that she would not disappoint him for the world. The childish vanity was so absurd that poor Dr. Maury could have laughed if he had not grieved so deeply for father and mother.

He sent her away at last, and called for Marie, who was cut to the heart. Clémentine, who had professed such great things! Clémentine, who was ready to be a martyr! In her humility, Marie was ready to tremble for her own constancy—but Clémentine! Dr. Maury asked, with a groan, how Barbe had behaved, and heard that she appeared not to listen to all the tempting things the curé held out, only looking scared and crying piteously, “Father would say I mustn’t!” and, as it seemed afterwards, more terrified at the thought she might be called on to repeat her catechism than at anything else. It seemed now as if she were completely bewildered by Clémentine’s conduct, looking at her with awe-struck eyes, and turning away when her sister began to dilate on the grand things which her liberty was to bring her.

It was evident that though the children had been left, M. de Guillemard doubtless feeling that he had

them safely, to-morrow would be too late for the plans Dr. Maury had arranged to be carried out. They must start this very night. Questioning had extracted from Clémentine that Claude and Jeannette had been sent off in the morning, but fortunately she had known nothing of their guardian's scheme for them, and this made M. de Guillemand suppose that having got rid of his own child he intended to remain at his post.

There was a poor washerwoman living near, who, though a Roman Catholic, was bound by many ties of gratitude to Dr. Maury. He went out and brought her back, explaining that she was to sleep that night in the house and ask no questions, which she was willing to do. He saw no other means. Clémentine refused to cast her lot with them, and her sisters must not be sacrificed to her. He told some of his plans to Marie, but absolutely forbade her speaking of them.

Meanwhile the hour had arrived by which it was possible that Lecocq might return. Dr. Maury said little even to Marie, for he was afraid to trust himself to words, but he heard every sound with the most painful acuteness, and paced up and down the room before the window, unable to use the time for what was really much needed, the close consideration of his own plans. His little Jeanne, never before separated from him—where was she now? To what roughness might

not the dainty little creature be exposed? How many perils lay between them? And then he reproached himself for his weak faith, and began his hasty march again, straining both eye and ear.

Lecocq came at last, and Dr. Maury hurried out bare-headed to hear a budget of news which lifted one weight from his heart, and yet seemed to leave another in its place. Nevertheless, she was safe so far, and he thanked God and took comfort. Then he listened greedily to all the details, how bravely she had behaved, how M. Claude took all the care in the world of her, and how trustworthy a friend Dumoulin had proved. He kept Lecocq as long as he could, and when he dared not detain him longer, felt as if he had heard nothing, and as if his heart was as hungry as ever.

Clémentine was roused in the night by a touch, and started up in terror, crying out "*Maman!*" When she saw Marie standing by her bed, she would have exclaimed crossly, but that there was something in the girl's face which made her look again in wonder. Then she saw that Grande Barbe was also there, peering over her sister's shoulder, and gazing at her with the same sort of bewildered perplexity with which she had gazed all day. Clémentine looked from one to the other.

"Thou and Barbe dressed? What is this, Marie?" she faltered at last.

"It is adieu—adieu for ever," said Marie in a broken voice; and her eyes were shining strangely. "We are going, Clémentine, and thou wilt not come!"

"Going! To-night! But, Marie, what will become of me?" and she caught at her sleeve. "I shall die if I stay here alone!"

"Mère Josselin is in the next room," said her sister gravely.

Suddenly Barbe pushed forward, and flung her arms round Clémentine's neck.

"Oh, come, come, Clémentine!" she cried impetuously. "Jeannette is gone, and Claude, and now thou. Thou dost not mean it, thou wast only in play. Oh, get up quickly, and come with us, and then we shall be safe from those men!"

Clémentine disengaged herself petulantly.

"See then," she said, "thou art so rough, Grande Barbe! It is you two who go, not I, and it is very unkind. If you were not silly we might all be quite happy."

Marie laid her hand on Barbe's shoulder.

"Come, Barbe," she said, in a strangely altered tone. And then she stooped down and kissed Clémentine. "Adieu, my sister, adieu," she said. "May our God

forgive thee and keep thee. But, oh, I think it will break our mother's heart when we tell her."

"Where are you going?" asked Clémentine eagerly.

But no one answered her. Marie only shook her head; and then her pale, sad face, her shining eyes, turned away, and passed for ever out of Clémentine's life. She cried a little when they had left her, feeling a sort of vague sorrow and consciousness of her own sin, also troubled, in spite of Mère Josselin, with the feeling that she was left alone in the old house. But gradually the dreams in which she had indulged herself without check of late, came back in all their delight, and she fell asleep with scarcely more than an idle wonder where they could be going, and whether M. de Guillemand might not be vexed to find them gone.

Meanwhile Dr. Maury had hurried them in the darkness of this stormy night, which made him send up many a prayer for Jeanne, to a house which belonged to some of his poor friends, and which he had fixed upon because it was built almost against one of the town gates; and by means of ropes he thought the descent from a window would not be impracticable. Thus he hoped to make some way in the darkness, and at any rate continue night travelling until he got into a part where there was less danger of being recognised. And it was at this house he had managed by degrees to

bring the dresses which it would be necessary for them to wear as disguise.

He was warmly greeted by the brown-faced little old man and woman, who lived in an odd, irregular house, and though no light appeared from the outside, they were watching, and ready at his light tap to admit him. Coarse dresses were provided for the two girls, and a complete pedlar's pack for Dr. Maury; but the old woman shook her head when they all came out in their new characters.

"It is good, but not what it should be. Say then, my man, what is needed?"

The old man stepped back and surveyed them critically.

"It is thy brown, my Angelin," he said. "The faces are too fair for the sun and air of the fields to have beat upon them."

Old Angelin laughed.

"He has his fancies always, my man. One would think there was a book inside him, ready written. But as for the brown, he has reason, and it is soon done at this time of the year. There are walnuts in the house."

Barbe's spirits rose with her disguise. She whispered to Marie, "It is like our stories;" but Marie seemed to speak and move mechanically. She had deep and

clinging affections, and the shock of separation from so many who were dear to her had been very severe. More than all had Clémentine's decision cut her to the heart.

As for Dr. Maury, with danger and action his energy rose, as it did when he was fighting disease and death. He was very cheery and encouraging, sure that they could easily reach his first halting-place before the morning dawned, and hopeful about all beyond. More than this, they hoped to use this house as a road to the open country, and ropes were there, so knotted, as to make the descent very practicable to active persons. Of course absolute silence was needful, and there were fears that Big Barbe might meet with one of her unlucky tumbles, from which no one ever felt safe, or utter some involuntary exclamation which might ruin everything. Barbe herself trembled lest this might be the case, and indeed, was only just in time to swallow a loud gasp of relief which rose up when she felt Marie's arms round her at the foot of the rope.

This part safely accomplished, Dr. Maury took their hands, and led them through lanes, and across fields, and by orchards, with as great a surety as if the brightest sunshine of France were lighting their path. And yet it was dark, wet, blowing; and, if they had but known it, the *Trois Sœurs* was flying before the

wind to her doom. It was fortunate for him that he thought of his child as more safely disposed of than if she had been here in the fields of Normandy—one of a pedlar's family.

Marie was thankful for the silence of that journey, Barbe was recovering her spirits and longing to chatter, but Dr. Maury only admitted an occasional whisper, and not that, when they were in the lanes. Once he stopped them suddenly, hearing the sound of horses, and hurried them to a dimly-discriminable gap in the hedge, behind which the two girls crouched trembling. Horses indeed they were, lanterns, too, and the gleam of armour, as Dr. Maury ascertained by cautious reconnoitring. Nor could he doubt who they were, as they rode slowly by, with some swearing, and now and then a laugh, and the clank of steel. They were a company of cuirassiers, and the *dragonnades* were to begin in Caen. He was just in time, but his thoughts flew back to those who were left behind.

The nights were long, and they managed to reach their first resting-place while it was yet dark—a little secluded farm, lying deep in the shadow of a wooded valley, and, as it seemed, secure from passers-by. But as yet not many leagues lay between them and Caen, and Dr. Maury dreaded the Sieur de Guillemard's powers of hunting out his prey too much not to insist

on every precaution. He hoped that he would believe him to have made for the coast—indeed, to undertake so long a journey across France at this time of year was a most improbable proceeding, so improbable, that therein lay its greatest safety; but while he hoped, he acted with all prudence, and none of the farm workers who came in with the first dawn of day saw anything to let them think that strangers were concealed in an upper room. They rested there throughout the day, Dr. Maury having resolved to use the night for at least one more stage of travelling, and then hoping to be able to get a guide and horse by which to lessen the great fatigue.

Weary Barbe slept for hours through the day, and really enjoyed the sense of adventure and strange peril; but Marie was restless, all the sleep she got being broken and disturbed by haunting dreams of Clémentine, and of her mother's reproachful face. She did not complain, but after the long and pressing journey of the next night she flagged so much that Dr. Maury was alarmed, and though it was attended with risk, he insisted on their remaining for two days at their next halting-place. From that they got a little boy for guide, and a donkey on which Marie could ride, and their start was made by day, their path taking them always through the wildest and most unfrequented

parts. As to food, it was of the plainest description ; milk could be sometimes had, black rye bread always, and chestnuts which were roasted in wood ashes. There were days on which they got long lifts in carts, but the roads were execrable, and Marie seemed to feel the jolting as the worst kind of fatigue. Happily the weather, for the time of year, was on the whole favourable ; and there was plenty of beauty in the late autumn tints of the great woods which the seigneurs guarded jealously for their hunts, and in the picturesque rough bridle-paths which went over hill and through valley with apparently no other aim than that of following the irregularities of the country. By and by they got into much flatter lands, the great plains of France stretched out before them with a monotony which they found it hard to struggle against. A hill may be a barrier, but it gives you hope. A plain oppresses you with the sense of the impossibility of all your efforts.

More than once they came upon fugitives like themselves ; but though it was good to exchange greetings, they dared not join company, for numbers only increased their dangers. The disguises were often stranger than their own ; some pretended to be idiots, others deaf and dumb ; women travelling alone were dressed as men, girls carrying heavy burdens on their back. One

or two had made their way up from the south, escaping for their lives from cruelties which were worse than death. Louis the Fourteenth driving out of his kingdom those who feared God, was making way for those who feared neither God nor man ; and across the valleys and woods of his France there was flung forward already the breath of the coming revolution, and the terrible shadow of the guillotine.

## CHAPTER XIII.

## REST AT LAST.

WITH the exception of many hardships, and of some alarms which came to nothing and have not been mentioned here, things had really gone well with the little party so far, and they got by degrees as far as Burgundy, so that Switzerland seemed almost within reach. Two things kept Dr. Maury uneasy. One was his anxiety about Jeanne. He had written to the English friends in Somersetshire where Claude was to take the child, but no letter had yet reached him in return, and the long suspense was scarcely endurable. The other was Marie's health. The fatigue seemed to tell upon her to an extent which surprised him, as she had always been considered strong. But Clémentine's desertion had affected her more deeply than he knew, and perhaps the great restraint she had put upon her grief had caused it to work bodily mischief. The walnut-juice in some measure hid the whiteness of her face, but there was a drawn, suffering look about the features, and a growing languor, which gave him serious uneasiness. As for Barbe, she was so brown that the walnut would have been hardly necessary, except for the great

delight she felt in its application, and her merriment and good humour were unfailing. It was really exactly the kind of life which charmed her, and in which her awkwardness offended nobody.

In Burgundy, where the country swept up and down in large and easy lines, with slopes which in summer would be covered with bountiful vines, and where rivers flowed in broad and placid currents, Dr. Maury was at home, and took a boyish delight in finding the old landmarks unchanged. No relations remained, but he felt confident of his friends, and was disposed to leave the line marked out in the Huguenot maps, and trust to old personal friendships. To one house in particular, inhabited by a mother and daughter, he was determined to betake himself, for although their religion was that of their persecutors, that old friendship he felt sure would bear the strain even of these divided days. Madame de Chevenix and her daughter lived in an old chateau on the borders of a forest; in this forest Dr. Maury left the two girls while he went boldly up to the house in his character of pedlar, and managed to get an interview with the ladies.

Their distress was great at seeing their old friend reduced to this plight, but they pledged themselves to serve him, and as soon as night came Marie and Barbe were to be smuggled into the house.

"The worst of it is," said Madame de Chevenix, who was a bright-eyed and beautiful old lady, "that I have no good character among our people. They suspect me because I have not the heart to inform against you poor deluded Huguenots. Bah! I could not: it is much better to live and let live! But I have already had a visit from the soldiers, and they frightened poor Charlotte out of her wits. Never mind, we will see."

With the assistance of a gardener, the only one of the servants in whom they could place confidence, the two girls were brought into the house without any one being aware of their presence, and Mademoiselle de Chevenix concealed them in a garret which was unused, and of which, as the linen was stored there, she was able to keep the key.

It was more difficult to dispose of Dr. Maury, but here François, the gardener, came to the rescue. His brother was to have arrived the very next day to live at his cottage and work in the grounds. Dr. Maury might appear as this brother, and by feigning deafness escape inconvenient questionings. He jumped at this proposal, for indeed Marie's increasing weakness made it very desirable that she should have rest and better food. She would not complain, and persisted that she only felt tired; but the rapid failure of strength alarmed him.

A week was the longest time he had thought of spending at the chateau, but at the end of the week it was evident that Marie was incapable of encountering the fatigue of the further journey. It was a great trial to him that he could not get to see her; only once had it been ventured upon, and the risk was great. Mademoiselle de Chevenix reported her symptoms to him, and François fetched medicines from the nearest town as if for his mistress.

Barbe found these long days and longer nights in the garret an irksome change from that open air life which had been delightful to her. She was very sorry for Marie, but it never entered her head that anything worse ailed her than being tired, and she longed with all her might to start once more. Still, her good humour did not desert her, and she extracted as much amusement as was possible under the circumstances; indeed, an occasional caper became too weighty to be laid at the door of rats, and Madame de Chevenix heard with a sympathising face her woman's assurances that *les revenants* had certainly again been visiting the old house. François was her great help, and, as his mistress said, it was good of him, as his brother was priest in a neighbouring village.

Marie was feverish and restless, and so long as some simple *tisane* was by her side took little or no food.

Barbe was always very ready for the meals which kind, anxious Mademoiselle de Chevenix brought up at irregular times and with some difficulty. She was always glad, too, when Marie began to talk, though it was often odd, quick talking, unlike herself. She said one day, for instance—

“I have seen Clémentine, Barbe. She is in the convent, very gay, with other girls: she does not want us at all. That is lucky, is it not ?”

“She would not like being here,” said Grande Barbe, looking round with a shrug of her broad shoulders.

“No. She has got what she likes. But thou wilt tell our mother that it was not because she was frightened. They persuaded her, and I was not clever enough to persuade her back again. It was my fault.”

“No, no, Marie,” protested Barbe, seizing her sister’s hot hand with more zeal than discretion, but vaguely terrified by something in Marie’s manner. “Thou couldst not help it; when Clémentine would, she would. Mother will not blame thee.”

“Thou wilt tell her,” repeated Marie more faintly, for she was very soon exhausted.

“Why then ?” asked Barbe in amazement. “Thou wilt tell her thyself.”

Marie made a gesture of dissent, but ceased talking,

turning her head from side to side with restless feebleness. Barbe watched her with a swelling heart.

“Marie,” she said at last, with great earnestness and a trembling voice, “art thou very ill?” But she had no answer.

When Mademoiselle de Chevenix next climbed up the stairs to the garret, she was startled by the clutch with which she was greeted by Barbe. “Oh, madame,” she cried in a whisper, “she has been talking so strangely! Is it true? Is she very ill?”

“Do not be frightened, my child,” said Mademoiselle Charlotte, calmly. “It is weakness, that is all.”

“But does weakness kill people? Marie will not die, will she? Oh, no, no!”

“Hush! do not disturb her. See, she is smiling at us.”

And indeed Marie seemed revived, and Barbe, quickly hopeful, read her psalm, and that night slept quietly, thinking that perhaps her sister had only been dreaming. Nevertheless, the next day Mademoiselle de Chevenix managed to speak to Dr. Maury, and her account gave him a sharp pang.

“I must see her at all costs,” he said, quickly.

“I have been thinking. There is a basket of dry beech-leaves which you and François can carry up between you. It will be thought they are for stuffing the mattresses.”

Dr. Maury's heart sank yet lower when he saw Marie, though her eyes glistened with delight at hearing his kind voice.

"My child," he said, bending over her tenderly, "you should be better by this time."

"Oh, and I am better, monsieur. It has been rest and peace here. But is it safe for you? Can you stay just a few minutes and read to me? My eyes are too weak."

"*Restez tranquille, monsieur,*" said François, sitting down at the door. "I will keep watch."

Mademoiselle de Chevenix went away, she dared not take part in the religious exercises of Huguenots, but François listened. As they went down again, he said, "She looks like a saint. And the words were good—very good. *Tenez,* perhaps some day I, too, shall come after you people. I have sometimes thought of it."

The rest and peace were not to continue to the end. The next morning a child came rushing up to François, clapping her hands in glee, and crying—

"The soldiers are coming! They have just turned in at the gate. *Oh, qu'ils sont beaux!*"

François was never taken at a disadvantage. He called to Dr. Maury, who was working near, to remain, and hurried into the house to give warning, managing to be out again before the soldiers trotted up, gay with

plumes and steel. They shouted to François to come and hold the horses of those who dismounted, while others immediately rode round the house, stationing themselves here and there.

“Who has thy mistress in the house, *coquin*?” one asked.

“Monsieur, there are madame and mademoiselle, Jean, Perrot, Claudine, the ——”

“Hold thy peace, then! It is said she harbours *cagots*.”

“*Cagots!*” repeated François. “What, those wretches who are not even Christians——”

“Peace, I say. Are you all Catholics?”

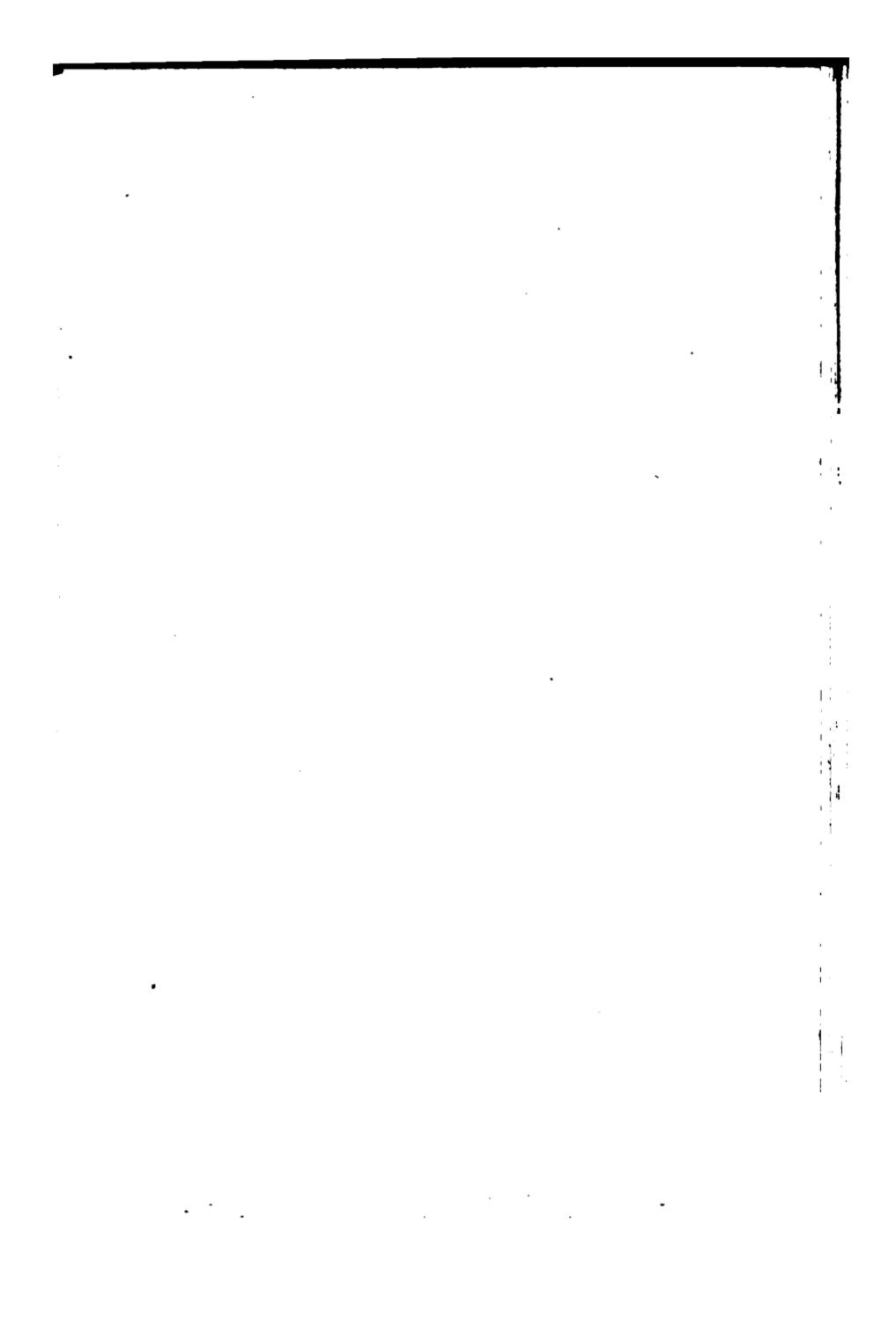
“Ask our curé, monsieur.”

“Who is that?” said the dragoon, pointing to Dr. Maury.

“My brother, monsieur, and stone deaf. Come here, you oaf,” shouted François, gesticulating violently.

“We lose time,” said the soldier with an oath. “Come!” and followed by about half-a-dozen of his men he clattered up to the door.

It was Madame de Chevenix herself, old as she was, who had been at work meanwhile, mademoiselle being greatly terrified at this second visit from the dreaded dragoons. Madame hurried her daughter up-stairs, quickly directed that Marie should be lifted from her





"The two ladies went down into the great salon, and tried to look as stately and unconcerned as if nothing depended on the visit."—Page 197.

bed and laid upon the floor, made Barbe lie by her, and dragged the mattress of the bed upon them, flinging the sheet in a heap over their heads, and then scattering upon it the basket of dried leaves, as if the mattress were in process of stuffing. The room was hastily given an uninhabited look, the door left open as if to invite inspection, and the two ladies went down into the great salon and tried to look as stately and unconcerned as if nothing depended on the visit, though in truth their hearts were beating fast.

But the composure and the stateliness, together with old Madame de Chevenix's fine manner of astonishment, did slightly awe the dragoon who marched into the room. He explained that Huguenots were reported to be in the neighbourhood, and that he had orders to search madame's house, she being suspected of friendliness towards them.

"But certainly, monsieur," said madame, rising. It was true her family had been Catholics always, and perhaps her ancestors had not deserved that this slight should be put upon it, but the king's will was paramount. Where would monsieur desire to begin his investigations? The peasants had been using the baking-ovens that day, and she feared all might not be perfectly in order, but she and her daughter were at the disposal of

the king's officer. Would he perhaps wish to begin with the garrets ?

Mademoiselle de Chevenix, with her heart beating in that wild manner, looked with wonder at her mother, who might, as she stood there, in her beautiful old brocade, with her powdered hair and her gold-headed cane, courteous and calm, have been about to do the honours of the château to a welcome guest. And to suggest the garrets ! But the dragoon, whose head was a little turned by this politeness, assented readily, muttering something about those dogs of Huguenots being everywhere, sometimes even hiding in houses without the master's knowledge. Madame de Chevenix professed a little curiosity on the subject as they went together up the stairs. Why were they then sought for ?

Because they were evading the laws. When they were in concealment they were doubtless on their way to quitting the kingdom, contrary to the king's edict. They were not to be permitted to live in holes, but to be had out where they could be watched. Ah ! Madame understood now perfectly.

They were at the door. Would monsieur enter ? Then Mademoiselle Charlotte saw to her dismay that two other soldiers had tramped up behind them. She trembled so violently that her mother gave her a

reproachful look, herself watching without any outward signs of fear the men go round the room, opening a great press and tapping the walls. One of them at last kicked the mattress.

"If there were a chance of plunder I would have that for my share," he said to his companion.

The first dragoon approached Madame de Chevenix.

"The other rooms, if you please, madame."

With a beating yet triumphant heart the old lady walked down the stairs, hoping that her daughter would have presence of mind enough to lock the door when they had passed through. Barbe, who had been heavily kicked on the shoulder, and only just restrained from crying out, lay trembling. Presently she ventured to poke a little hole and look out.

"Oh, Marie," she whispered, "they are gone!" But Marie had fainted.

Madame de Chevenix might have retired to her salon, and allowed the dragoons to search her house without assisting at the duty herself, but that she professed to be desirous to forward the king's will with every observance of respect, and insisted upon accompanying them. Perhaps she had a malicious pleasure in perceiving that her presence caused an uncomfortable restraint to the soldiers, who could have hectored loudly enough if left to themselves, but were forced to pay

involuntary homage to the stately and bright-eyed old lady who treated them with the most scrupulous courtesy, and seemed to endeavour to anticipate their wishes. They had a feeling, moreover, as if she were laughing at them when she ordered the servants to drag out baskets, draw back curtains, even fling open the doors of the great baking-ovens, where a Huguenot would assuredly have been roasted if he had taken refuge, proposed their going to visit the stone pigeonn<sup>e</sup>te, a round tower near the château, and was ready with so many suggestions as to leave the dragoons assured there was nothing hidden. Finally, having overpowered them with her politeness, she had wine brought, herself poured it out, and then with a most stately curtsey inquired if there were anything further in which she could assist them. In fact she fairly curtsied them out of the house. When they were gone she turned triumphantly to her daughter—

“There, Charlotte !”

“Madame, you are a marvel !” said her daughter, kissing her.

“Ah, *trembleur*, you have no more heart than a rabbit ! Now go up and see after those poor children, and take a cordial for Marie.”

Mademoiselle Charlotte found Barbe in great distress. Marie was still unconscious, and all she could manage

unaided was to lift her on the mattress and sprinkle a little water on her face. Between them they made things better; but the fainting-fit lasted a long while, and even when they had brought her back to consciousness, it seemed as if much of the little strength she had before were left behind.

Poor Barbe was not really a good nurse—Clémentine would have been much more handy and collected—and she was dreadfully weighed down with the feeling of her own awkwardness. She slept, too, during the night, waking with a guilty start, and then gradually giving way again to the overpowering weight of sleepiness which oppressed her. Yet to Marie, stepping softly down into that valley of the shadow of death which we shall all see some day, it seemed as if Barbe's hearty devotion were God's gift of sunshine on the road. She never thought of herself, except to be ashamed of her own inefficiency, and though her shoulder was sore and bruised, Mademoiselle de Chevenix had never known why she winced when between them they raised Marie into an easier position. She might have been frightened had she known how far Marie had gone into the deep shadows of that valley, but even then she would not have been frightened for herself, but lest more should be wanted than she could give.

Dr. Maury had another uneasiness. He had as yet

avoided attending mass, though he had gone into the church and knelt in prayer at another time. But staying away from mass would soon awake suspicion. The village, too, had been greatly excited by a number of men, chained together and driven onwards with brutal words and blows, passing through on their way to the galleys. Twelve of these were condemned Huguenots. A pastor had been found concealed not many leagues distant, put to the torture in order to make him give up the names of his associates, then hung. The air seemed full of reports; everywhere danger, and the fear of worse than the quiet death for which he felt as if even Marie's mother might thank her God.

It was a sore grief to kind Madame de Chevenix to think of the long hours of loneliness in the garret; yet they dared not cause suspicion among the servants by going there as they would have otherwise done. The loneliness did not trouble Marie. To her, as she had told Dr. Maury, it was full of rest and peace, and who can tell what abiding sense of an unseen Presence was there in its fulness? She lay, sometimes restless, but more generally in a kind of half-dozing state, now and then murmuring a few words to Barbe, and always thanking her for her eager services. At first these words were more than Barbe could bear, but she found that her grief troubled Marie more than anything else,

and so had learned to hush her vehement protestations that she would soon be well and strong again. Marie's fear that her mother would think her to blame as to Clémentine's conduct, had passed away. She said often, in a satisfied whisper, "Mother will know." But she charged Barbe with many messages, and also much which she was to tell Claude. And she asked more than once whether no news had come of Claude or Jeannette.

There came a night—a cold, gusty night—when Barbe did not sleep. All through the long and weary hours Marie, restless again, yet scarcely conscious, wanted moving, called continually for her mother in her feeble voice, and complained of cold. Barbe, without knowing what it was, was terrified by the chill of her limbs. There was no heat remaining in the *chauffepied*, which Mademoiselle Charlotte kept filled as Barbe's only means of warming; she dressed herself, piled all she could upon the bed, and bent over Marie in an agony. Many of the words she caught seemed to have nothing connected in them, but they came as if she saw what was hidden from Barbe, and the child often looked round awestruck, expecting to see more than the long empty garret with its great *armoires* against the wall. What brightness filled it? To Barbe it was only full of shadows, and dimly lit, but on

Marie's dim eyes there may have already flashed some gleams of that brightness which comes from neither sun nor moon. For the first time, too, Clementine's name was not mentioned in her murmurs ; it was as if all that troubled her had passed away, and that she fancied father, mother, and Claude were with her, and was happy.

When Mademoiselle Charlotte came up in the morning, Barbe's face told her what a night it had been. But she ran to meet her, putting up her hand to ask her to be silent, and whispered that Marie had at last fallen asleep, and was resting quietly. Mademoiselle de Chevenix came very quietly to Marie's side, and bent over her long and earnestly. Barbe, who watched her wistfully, was not surprised that when she raised herself there were tears in her eyes, or that she murmured a few inaudible words, but she was very much astonished at Mademoiselle Charlotte drawing her to the door, and there telling her to follow her down-stairs as noiselessly as possible.

“But Marie !” she said, holding back.

“She will want nothing in your absence, my child,” said Charlotte, in a tremulous voice, “and I shall return again in a few moments.”

Then she took her through a passage, and into a small cupboard of a room, where she told her to remain,

and indeed as she went out locked the door. Barbe thought it all strange, longed to get back to Marie, and felt hungry ; but Mademoiselle Charlotte almost immediately re-appeared with some food and then vanished again. She grew very impatient at the long waiting which followed, thought she had been forgotten, and was afraid Marie needed her, when the door was again softly unfastened, and Madame de Chevenix came in. Her bright dark eyes were full of tears, and looked so pitifully at Barbe that she cried out at once—

“ Oh, madame, is she worse ? Oh, pray, pray let me go to her ! ”

Madame put her hands gently upon Barbe’s shoulders and kissed her on both cheeks.

“ My child,” she said, “ think of thy father and mother, who have only thee, and do not cry out. It was not sleep, that quiet rest—or rather it was that long sleep which men call death. She had passed away, thy Marie, before Mademoiselle my daughter brought thee here.”

## CHAPTER XIV.

## A DEVONSHIRE VILLAGE.

IT will be remembered that Claude, when he went off to seek for help, left little Jeanne in a half unconscious state, as it were between life and death. Life was, however, strong in her healthy, though slight little frame, and it struggled back, although with difficulty. She sat up and looked round her presently, pushing the wet hair back from her eyes, and shivering. Then she saw the smoking fire, and dragged herself nearer it, spreading out her little hands, and gradually taking comfort from the warmth. At first she did not even wonder where she was; then, as she began to remember, she broke into piteous, feeble sobs for Claude. Her solitude, and the fierce roar of the sea, terrified her. She tried to get up more than once, falling back again from sheer weakness, but at last managing to stagger to her feet and out of the cave.

By this time the tide had turned, and the fury of the wind in some measure abated. On one side, it is true, the waves still flung themselves so violently against the cliffs, that the spray went flying up in wild clouds, but on the other the sea had gone back and left

a number of broad limestone ledges sloping, but easy to pass. Jeannette looked piteously round for Claude, and called him again and again with all her little might; no answer coming back but the angry beat of the sea. Oh, where was he? Why had he left her? Perhaps he had gone a little way along these rocks, and she might overtake him. She started off at once, running, stumbling, more than once falling, for her limbs trembled under her in what seemed the strangest way. It appeared to her that she had been running for a long, long way, when everything grew dark, she stretched out her little hands, fell, and lay there again insensible.

Although the *Trois Sœurs* had gone down unseen by any human eye on shore, it was not long before fishermen, coming down to have a look out to sea, perceived signs which told them that some such disaster had occurred. Broken spars and bits of wood were seen carried by on the waves; and as the line of cliffs was known to be dangerous to shipping it was thought not unlikely that a vessel had been there wrecked. The men, many of them, went along towards the top of the cliffs from which they could command a wide look-out; one man alone, unseen or unnoticed by the others, made his way beneath. This man lived some five or six miles off; he had brought in his cart

at this early hour, because he thought it possible some vessel might have got on the rocks, and his object in creeping round and keeping himself as much as possible under the lee of the cliffs, was the hope of picking up something from the wreck which he might appropriate without observation. A very small keg of brandy he got hold of with difficulty ; the next thing he saw was a child lying on the rocks.

Peter Drake was a rough and unscrupulous man, but, as Chamier said, most men have a soft side, and his was brought uppermost whenever anything reminded him of a little Molly who rested under the white daisies of the churchyard at Mallaton. Jeannette was just her age, and as she lay there her little pale face reminded him so strongly of Molly's the last time he had looked at her—through his tears—that, although he expressed his feelings by an oath, he stooped down at the same time and lifted her in his arms as gently as if he had been a woman. The next thought which came to him was that he would carry her back to his cart, and drive her home to Mallaton. It was an odd sort of secretive impulse ; others would have loudly proclaimed their discovery, but Drake disliked talk, and went his own way often to his own hurt. He had a feeling as if the child were specially meant for him ; he was sure that she was not dead ; probably she had

been washed on shore, and now belonged to no one. But though no one should dispute her with him, he would not have the matter known.

It seemed as if poor Jeannette's concealments were never to end, for Drake hid her as carefully as Dumoulin had done; and when he had got back to his cart, where the old horse was standing in a quiet dream, he laid her carefully within it, and jogged away as fast as he could towards his home. As soon as he thought himself out of sight of any watchful fisherman, he stopped the cart, opened the keg, and forced a few drops of brandy between her lips. But although it was not long before the child unclosed her eyes, she recovered no actual consciousness. She started up and chattered volubly in a language of which he could understand nothing, then would sink back again with a feeble moan, which sounded so like little Molly's, that Drake gave a startled glance, and whipped up his horse. It was evident that she was very ill, and this began to cause him uneasiness.

It was often said at Mallaton that Drake feared but one person, and that was his wife. She was not passionate like himself, but she was a cold, hard woman, with an obstinate will, which neither ill words nor ill usage, and he had tried both, could quell. Drake knew that if he brought a sick child into the house, she was

quite capable of altogether declining to nurse her. He had cared far more for little Molly than she. How much perhaps was proved by what he did when he reached Mallaton. Instead of turning up the lane to his own cottage, he drove on to the house of the man whom he was supposed to hate more heartily than any other man in the village—Parson Randolph, the minister.

Why he hated him need not be explained here; why he went there now cannot be explained at all, and nothing remains but the fact that he did go, and that Madam Randolph being at the door, and turning in wonder to see Peter Drake drive up, he said, clumsily—

“ ‘Tes a little maed as belongs to me. Her’m bad, an’ my missis bain’t no nurse. A’m willin’ to pay for her lodgинг.’ ”

“ Do you mean that you wish us to take her, Peter Drake ? ” said Madam Randolph, drawing herself up to the full height of her fine figure, and looking him full in the face.

“ Ees. Volk say you’m a good nurse.”

“ Where does she come from ? ”

“ Vrom the water. Can’t you see ? ”

Madam Randolph asked no more questions. It was all strange enough; but she opened her arms and took Jeannette in them, and carried her straight away to

a little room to be nursed to whichever end it might please God to bring her illness.

But to which end it would be was for a long while doubtful, for Jeannette had gone through enough to kill those who were much stronger than she; and some weight of terror seemed to rest upon her little heart, which, knowing nothing of what had caused it beyond Peter Drake's words that she had come out of the sea, Madam Randolph found it difficult to soothe. Nor was she learned enough in French to understand the quarter of what Jeannette said, or to make herself comprehended in return. But this did not so much matter, as there are certain looks and acts which want no language to interpret them; and when poor little Jeanne understood anything, she understood that she was cared for, and kept warm in bed.

As to where she had been found, Drake, the only man who could have given any information, was dumb. He would not come up to the parsonage himself, though he got news of the child through the farm children who went there. Madam Randolph met him in the road and questioned him, without extracting any good out of his answers, which, to tell the truth, made her rather sore, for there was not another man, woman, or child in the parish who could have stood up against Madam Randolph's will. Then such a heavy fall of

snow came that the roads were almost impassable, and Parson Randolph, who might otherwise have made some inquiries along the coast, was laid up with a sharp twist of rheumatism.

Mallaton was a little Devonshire village, buried in a very labyrinth of lanes; a nest of thatched and white-washed cottages, built of good thick cob, with great chimneys running picturesquely up the outside of the houses, and steep straggling streets in which the red mud lay thick. The people who lived there were a placid, self-contained race, with little of the adventurous element in them. Though the sea was but six miles away, many of them, more than many, had never seen it. It was on record that the oldest farmer of the parish had once been to "Lunnon town," and could tell you stories of highwaymen enough to make your hair stand on end; otherwise Mallaton folk were born, married, and died at Mallaton without any longing for a wider world. Even the Duke of Monmouth's rebellion, which had stirred many a far village in Devonshire but a little while back, had not penetrated here; and Madam Randolph, whose nature was somewhat fiery and impetuous, got impatient over what she called their sluggish ways, and longed, as she said, for something that should shake them into action.

Besides the parsonage, there was the great house

of the place, which belonged to Squire Harewood, whose family was absent at the time that Jeannette was cast, a little waif, upon the shores.

Very slowly at first, but by degrees making better progress, the child was nursed back to life. Madam Randolph's face and voice had become familiar to her long before she was able to wonder who she was, or what the strange place meant; and this was as well, as all the knowledge now came slowly and with preparation, while at first she had hardly the strength for wonder, and only looked wistfully round. Two names, "mon père" and "Claude," were constantly on her lips, and Madam Randolph thought pitifully that they had been with her in the ship, and were doubtless swallowed up in that wreck from which she had been washed on shore. She guessed at some part of the story, for the Huguenots were arriving in England by hundreds, and more than once Jeannette had murmured something about the Good Shepherd who held her. But the conversation between them, as it grew into conversation at all, was curiously incomplete, and Madam Randolph was vexed at her own ignorance.

"This comes of being buried in an outlandish place," she said, laughing, to her husband, as she gave him her arm to help him across the room. "Now there's Di in London I dare say has kept up the trick of it, while

I feel like a simpleton at understanding next to nothing of her quick pretty speech."

"Well, Bess, your wits will not long be baffled. And one thing will come of this business, Peter Drake will be a greater favourite than ever."

"Favourite!" repeated Madam, giving him one of her bright searching looks.

"Yes, dear heart. For is he not the only man in the place that has ever opposed your will?"

Madam Randolph coloured at this, and something like tears sprang into her eyes, for the high spirit on which her husband jested, was a source of trouble to herself.

"Well," she said, "'tis a dear little creature, and I shall bring her into the parlour to-morrow for you to try your hand. You can ask her some questions, for Lizzie is much exercised with the thought she is a 'papisher.'"

Jeannette's eyes were making more observations than her tongue. When she asked for Claude, Madam had smiled and said, "*Plus tard*," and on this she had rested, feeling too weak to be impatient, and having confidence in Madam's eyes. But when she had been carried into the parlour, and looked curiously, and been settled in a chair in the chimney-corner, she cried out again for Claude with a suddenness and passion which pierced their hearts. It was her old cry,

"I want Claude! I want Claude!"

"My child, he is not here. Was he in the ship with you?"

"Not here!"

She slipped off her seat, and would have staggered towards the door as if to go and look for him, if Madam Randolph had not caught her in her arms.

"Not now," she said, gravely; "you must be quiet, and let us hear. Was Claude in the ship?"

"Yes, yes! And they tied me on the board;" she shuddered and grew pale. "But afterwards I saw him."

"Does she mean on land?" asked the parson. "He may have been saved with her, of course. Was it on the land she saw him?"

"Yes, yes, yes!" Jeannette answered, nodding rapidly, and looking from one to the other.

"But Drake vows she was alone," said Madam Randolph, uneasily.

"Drake's conduct has been odd throughout," said her husband. "The child is a sensible little creature; tell her just how it was, Bess, and that if this Claude is on shore we shall be able to get some news of him. If your French stumbles, mine sticks altogether."

It seemed as if Jeannette gradually understood, for her despair quickly changed into hope. Claude would

come, she was sure. He always came when she wanted him very much. Madam Randolph could not understand all she said, but she saw that there was a bright light in her eyes. Then she asked for some paper, and said she would write a letter to her father.

Madam Randolph and her husband looked at each other, fearing that here was a worse sorrow. But when they asked if he, too, was on board the ship, Jeannette shook her head with great decision, and poured out a rapid history of their parting, and the cart, and the apples, and the barrel, until she quite bewildered her hearers, who were amused by watching the gesticulations of the thin little hands, which moved as fast as her tongue. But now that they heard there was a father living, they were as anxious as Jeanne could be to write to him, though a letter to a foreign country was a prodigious effort for Mallaton. And when it was written and directed, Jeannette turned very white, and asked to go back to her bed, whither the parson himself carried her.

She mended rapidly after this, and soon trotted about the house on the best of terms with everything and everybody. Parson Randolph and his wife were a young couple, without children, who had been for the last three or four years at this country village. Madam had been one of a large family, and though she loved

her husband devotedly, and her active mind found occupation everywhere, the quiet and the dulness were a little irksome to her. No one at Mallaton (except the squire's family, and its members were very much away from home) seemed to have heard or to care to hear of anything that passed beyond a little circuit of a couple of miles or so. Sometimes—mounted on a pillion behind her husband—she made a pilgrimage through depths of mud and mire, and the curvings of intricate lanes, to a neighbour's some miles off, where they would spend the night. But these were rare occasions, and she would say now and then, between jest and bitterness, that she was getting to believe that so long as Mallaton apple-trees gave good promise of cider, and its pigs of bacon, there was no need to look further, or trouble yourself about what might be going on elsewhere. (Indeed it is on record that when William of Orange landed at Torbay, one Mallaton man greeted another with the words, "There be another king landed down theer," pointing over his shoulder; and was answered, "Let un bide. Watt about that peg of Varmer Voords?") And it perhaps was rather a dangerous position for one of Madam's disposition that except her husband there was no one to whom she could look up, or even feel to be her equal in mind.

Into this somewhat torpid existence, little Jeanne

came like a sunbeam. It brightened the house to have her feet pattering about it, and it called Madam's wits into practice to learn to understand her, and to give the constant explanations which were required.

And what was Jeannette herself feeling? Jeannette, with her warm little clinging heart, away from all she loved? Perhaps it was this very warmth which comforted her, this and a strong hopefulness. She felt sure that very soon she would see them again, thought of them, chattered of them, said, "*Bon soir, mon père,*" every night when she lay down in her little white bed, and in the morning woke to a conviction that their coming was nearer than ever. Then there was a great deal which interested her in her life. She had lived much with grown-up people, and easily fell into new ways. She was full of bright excitement over unaccustomed oddities, and would shock Lizzie by the quaint remarks she made, all the quainter for the very broken English in which they were uttered. But being a little creature of very decided prejudices, she never thought that Lizzie was worthy to be compared to her own Madelon.

The joy of her new life lay in the Mallaton animals. Pigs, horses, cows, dogs, cats, everything that was favoured with four legs became friends, whose doings were chronicled with the utmost minuteness, and who

took off any need for other companions. Madam Randolph who had set about to supply her with clothes, made her a scarlet cloak and hood out of one of her own, and in this she went about the village with Madam, stirring Mallaton to a sleepy kind of wonder. Peter Drake's share in the matter had also been discussed in the church porch; but nothing could be made out of it, and he would not answer any questions as to where he had found her. Parson Randolph, as soon as the rheumatism would allow, rode down to the coast and made inquiries, at last hearing some talk of a young French gentleman, who had been going about, as it seemed, out of his mind, though nobody could understand the jargon he talked. But where he was now, or whether he would ever come back, nobody knew; and the parson could do no more than to beseech he might be stopped if he were seen again, and to bespeak a horse and man to let him know of him at his own expense.

The snow lay long in the deep drifts which it formed in the lanes, but the carts had beaten it down, and sometimes Peter Drake hovering round the parsonage would come upon Madam Randolph and Jeannette, and ask to take the child for a ride. He always spoke as if he had a certain right to her, and Madam could not deny that it was so, though she disliked these

expeditions. Jeanne, however, enjoyed them, jolting along, and getting peeps over the hedges, and talking gaily to Peter in her broken English. But he would never take her near the sea.

The church puzzled her a good deal. Mallaton Church was by no means a richly decorated or gorgeous building; but it seemed wonderful to Jeanne after the plain square "*temple*" at Caen. The windows with their mullions and curved lines fascinated her. So did an old crusader who slept with crossed legs in a niche under a fretted canopy. And when she first went there the Christmas holly and evergreens had not been taken down, and added to her amazement. Madam Randolph had a hundred questions to answer when they came back from what Jeanne called the *prêche*. Then it brought out a flow of talk about the pastor and Madame Hamon, and the old garden, and the playfellows, with all of whom Madam was by degrees becoming acquainted.

"See then," she said, "how much I shall have to tell them when they come! But, do you know, madam, I shall not be sorry if Clémentine remains. She is not good like Marie, though she talks, oh, so big! And I hope that perhaps if they have to go in apples as I did, she will not like it."

"But it would grieve the others if she did not come

with them," said Madam Randolph, who never discouraged Jeannette when she talked of this coming meeting.

"I think they would not mind it long," said Jeanne sagely. "It would not be like Marie's staying. I don't know what we should do without our Marie."

And Marie was lying in the little inclosure of a ruined *temple* in far-off Burgundy, where Dr. Maury and François had carried her in the night, and a pastor with a price set on his head had stolen out to read the service.

But of all this, Jeannette knew nothing. Sometimes, it is true, she had fits of bitter and inconsolable weeping, because, she said, father and Claude stayed away such a long, long time; but in general the gay little heart was as hopeful and confident as if they might be expected on the morrow. The parson was very uneasy at the absence of every clue to her friends; she knew nothing whatever of the names of those to whom Claude was taking her in England, and it seemed as if she had fallen among them absolutely without any mark by which she might be reclaimed. Madam said little, but in her heart of hearts this gave her no sorrow. The house was a different house, and Mallaton a different village, since a child had come to the parsonage, and the busy little steps which went in and out and up and

down all day long, were dear to her ears. It must not be thought that Jeanne was over-petted, or as Madam would have called it, cockered. There was strict, sound discipline in those days, and she was no more allowed to chatter or interrupt, except when Madam gave leave, than she was free to run out in the lanes until she had said her lessons.

These lessons were done partly with Madam Randolph, and partly with old Hobbs the parish clerk, who undertook all the education at Mallaton, and added Jeanne's, at the parson's request, though with some misgivings, due to an inveterate and British horror of "they Frenchies." The delicate embroidery which Marie had taught her delighted Madam Randolph so greatly that Jeanne began to take a certain pride in her work such as she had never felt before, and to dream dreams of working a cap for her kind friend, if only she could get the material to work it upon. There was a little trailing pattern which she remembered, which would be just the thing. But how to find cambric at Mallaton, or, if it were there, to pay for it when she had not a penny in the world !

And so the short winter days passed quickly away, more quickly than Jeannette knew, and February came in with a promise of spring, and no snow so much as left under the hedges ; and the lambs bleating in the

fields, and the birds singing, and green things beginning to push themselves upwards, and the sap swelling the branches, and the elms getting a warm reddish look about them, and the crops coming up finely, and good hopes for Mallaton that all its sowing and planting would come to a right end by and by. For this was Devonshire, and though the winters were longer and drearier then than they are now, and sometimes carried on in a way which it makes one shiver to think upon, still there were seasons when the sea breezes tempered all the sharpness, and brought a hope of spring in good time, and before other countries had a taste of it. And this was one of them.

## CHAPTER XV.

## NEW COMERS.

LETTERS were rare events at Mallaton, though Jeanette was ever hoping one would come for her, and Madam Randolph's best correspondent was her eldest sister Di, married in London to a Sir Martin Dennett, and the mother of one little girl who was the treasure of their hearts. It was in this very month of February that a letter tied with silk came from Lady Dennett, asking her sister if she would receive her little Bell, for Sir Martin was ordered to Bath for the waters, and she had heard so much of the small-pox being near the place, to say nothing of reports of the plague at Bristol, that it would terrify her out of her senses to have Bell there. She went on to say that she must trust to her sister's loving remembrance, without waiting for an answer, for they were to sleep at their cousin Frampton's the next night, and she would send Bell on with her own woman, a piece of perfection she had got through Mr. John Houghton's collections, very well bred, understanding the bass viol, and able to work most admirably in crewels.

It may be conceived what an excitement was caused

at the parsonage by this three-cornered letter. Madam Randolph almost wept for joy to know she should have Di's child, but was much put to it to think how she and the maid should be housed. It was settled at last by Jeanne being moved into a tiny closet, and two beds put into the room out of which she was transplanted. Jeannette's excitement was unbounded. A little girl, not very much older than herself, perhaps a second Barbette, to be in the same house, learn the same lessons, play in her games. The prospect was really enchanting ! And yet that same night, some tightening of the old home-strings followed, and she sobbed herself to sleep, wondering why those she loved were so long in coming.

Parson Randolph made so much fun of the bass viol and the crewels that he almost vexed his wife, who felt as if he were making fun of Di ; and Jeanne heard her let out a sharp speech or two, and admired her spirit, her own little cheeks flaming red for sympathy. As for Parson Randolph, he just looked up, but said nothing. Then to Jeanne's amazement, Madam coloured crimson, and all the imperious light fading out of her eyes, she knelt down by her husband's chair, and hid her face on his shoulder.

“ Oh, Harrington,” she said, “ shall I never be cured ? ”

“ Nay, dear heart,” he said gently, “ what is the matter ? ”

"To have spoken so unkindly to you who never so much as give me a cross word, and I am sure you might often, if it were only to make the balance true!"

"That were a poor sort of balance," he said, smiling. "But, Bess, this is a little matter, and there are others in which you have to bear with me."

She put her hands across his mouth. "Not one. I have the kindest, most indulgent husband in all England, and I often vex him with all my might. Mind, little Jeanne, you do not copy my tempers."

"I will tell you what you shall copy, little Jeanne," said the parson drawing her towards him. "Copy that brave spirit which is ready always to acknowledge what is wrong. You will not soon find a brighter example."

Jeannette looked with some wonder from one to the other, and at last went and flung her arms round Madam, whose eyes were dewy and soft. The odd conversation had puzzled her a little, but there was one part of it she never forgot—that Madam Randolph had freely owned to being in the wrong. And that seed bore fruit in a child's nature not unlike her own.

From the time the letter came Jeannette's heart had leapt to her mouth whenever the sound of wheels was heard in the lane. But always it was the carrier, or one of Farmer Ford's carts, or something no finer than Mallaton saw every day, until on the second evening,

when a steady rain had been falling for twelve hours at least, and the red mud in the lanes had taken a rich thickness, and everything on the slant was dripping dismally, a fine chariot drove up to Parson Randolph's little garden gate and Madam Randolph went flying out at once without hood or muffler.

Jeannette would have run after her, but that a sudden shyness seemed to keep her where she was, just inside the door ; but she looked and saw a wonderful sight in a little black boy who had got down from his seat, and was holding open the carriage door, and then a little girl jumped straight into her aunt's arms ; and a stately damsels descended after her who was, beyond a doubt, the lady of the bass viol and the crewels, and who looked up and down the parsonage with quite a disdainful air.

Madam Randolph came up the path leading Bell by the hand, and smiling more brightly almost than Jeanne had ever seen her.

“And here is a sister for you, my Bell,” she said gaily ; “a little French sister whom I hope you will love very dearly.”

Madam had a kind good heart, for in her joy over Di's child she did not forget Jeannette, and the two children looked at each other with shy pleasure. Bell was about ten years old and much darker than Jeanne,

with chestnut brown hair; dressed daintily in a gaily flowered frock, at which the little Huguenot girl, all unused to such finery, stared in wonder. Her aunt had a hundred questions to ask her about her mother, and Bell was full of revelations as to the journey, and Sambo's amazement, for he had never seen the country before, and was most terrified at the roads.

"And whenever we jolted a little more than usual Mrs. Prue screamed, and was sure there were highwaymen close by. Do you think there were, Aunt Bess?"

"I think if there had been you would have heard a little more of them, and I don't see why a rut in the road is to bring them. But there are too many about, 'tis certain. Have you brought Uncle Randolph a London Gazette, my Bell?"

"Yes. And mamma sent you an almanac. And five pounds of roasted coffee, Aunt Bess, and——"

But here Mrs. Prue appeared in the doorway, with an air of general contempt for the smallness of things about her, and summoned Miss Bell to have her hair smoothed and curled. Parson Randolph looked at his wife and smiled when the two had gone.

"There's a touch of the bass viol in her voice, eh, Bess?"

"Nay, now," said Madam, laughing and blushing,

"that is sheer mischief, Harrington; the poor woman is a little overpowered between her expectations and her realities. Consider the change from Bloomsbury Square to Mallaton Parsonage, and the jolting which has been necessary to bring down her ideas!"

"Yes, I consider. And 'twould not surprise me if we all suffered for it, too."

"I will see to that," said Madam Randolph, with an air of dignity. "But is not my Bell sweet? And I have scarce seen her since I answered for her."

"'Tis time, then, truly! And I am as glad as you can be that you have the pleasure, sweetheart; though my sermon is likely to stop at its second head to-morrow."

"Oh, how wicked of me never to have thought! I'll go this moment."

"Not till you have heard another piece of news. The squire and his family come back on Monday. They lie at Exeter to-night and to-morrow night. And Mistress White will be thankful if you can get over on Monday to see that all is as they would wish."

"News, indeed! Perhaps the small-pox is driving them, too. Well, I must go and look after my Bell."

"And tell Mrs. Prue we have but a pipe and tabor in the church, and can make good use of her services if she have brought her instrument."

**But Madam escaped, laughing.**

Jeanne was not quite sure that day whether she should like the new arrival or not. Madam Randolph was much taken up with her, and Bell's fine clothes had not been lost on Jeannette, and she felt as if she were a little set aside, so that something very like jealousy crept into her heart. Perhaps Madam divined it, for she was very quick in seeing things, but she would not take any notice, trusting that Bell herself would heal the sore. Bell had a very confiding and affectionate disposition, not sensitive or imaginative, but with a comfortable belief in all about her being right, and with no foolish dreams of superiority attached to her fine clothes. Indeed, she admired Jeanne's cloak and hood so much that she would not rest until her aunt had promised to make her another.

On Monday morning, Madam, to the children's great delight, offered to take them over to Squire Harewood's. The morning was soberly tinted, but breaks of sunshine every now and then lit it up, and there was a soft budding feeling in the air. Primroses starred the hedges but shyly as yet, so as to give greater enjoyment to the gathering; and as they came down towards the Court, they saw the rooks busily at work over their nests. The Court lay in a dip of land, grass running up to the terrace on two sides, and fine woods sweeping away

behind. A knot of old thorn trees stood near the principal entrance. While Madam Randolph went to advise the housekeeper, the children were free to wander about so long as they did not go out of sight of the house ; and Bell grew so interested over Jeanne's graphic account of her own adventures, which she was now able to relate in very tolerable English, that they both forgot how time had passed, and hurried back, hand in hand, with some doubts whether they had not been wanted. They slipped into the great hall hung round with antlered heads, and suddenly hearing a sound of voices, stood still, uncertain whether to advance or retreat, looking doubtfully at each other.

"Do you think Aunt Bess has gone home without us ?" whispered Bell.

"If we ran we should overtake her," Jeanne answered. "But, there, sure that is her voice!"

And, indeed, at this moment Madam came out of the withdrawing room, with what seemed to the children like a number of strangers. When she saw the two little wondering faces, Madam smiled and nodded, and said something to a short elderly lady next her, who was gaily dressed, and very stiffly upright in her carriage.

"Well, I protest," said this lady, holding up her hands, "I had no idea my Lady Dennett had a little

THE VENETIAN

"Come here, my dear, and  
tell me where are you?  
You little girl, and  
you must. Mrs.  
I dare her often, for  
she make no doubt  
about particular

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said Madam, still smiling, but with that unconscious fine air which somehow threw all Mrs. Harewood's gay dresses into the shade, "she has nothing to do with silk-weaving, though there is no shame in it, to my thinking ; and when we know what those people have given up, and for Whom, it seems to me we cannot show them honour enough. However, Jeannette and Bell must share their companions, like everything else, while they are with me."

Mrs. Harewood did not look altogether pleased, but at this moment her husband came out of a room where he had been refreshing himself after his journey with strong beer, as the custom was. He was a big red-faced man, with a loud laugh and a loud voice, and he noticed the children at once.

"Why, whose little wenches are these, Deb ?"

"This is my Lady Dennett's little girl," said Mrs. Harewood, drawing Bell forward. "You admire my Lady Dennett vastly, you know."

"Oh, yes, I know ; and she has brown ringlets and rosy cheeks like her mother. But who's the other ? The French child of whom the parson wrote to me ? Ah, ha, come out here, little puss," the squire went on, chucking her under the chin, to her great affronting ; "and so you gave them the slip, and got safe away ? 'Twas lucky, let me tell you, for do you know what

they are doing to all the French vessels now before they are let to leave the country?"

"No, sir," said Jeannette, clinging to Madam's hand.

"Well, 'tis this. In case little misses or anybody else should be hid away in the hold, they smoke it with something which kills them. There, now, what do you think of that?"

Jeanne, pale and trembling, flung her arms round Madam Randolph.

"Oh, father! father!" she cried, with long sobs, not loud, but shaking her violently.

"Why, what ails the little rogue?" said the squire, who was good-humoured, and sorry to have made the child cry.

"Good luck!" said his wife, impatiently. "To fly out at a word!"

But Madam was comforting poor Jeanne as best she could, telling her her father was perhaps safe in France, or in England, where he might see their advertisements, or that he would not come by ship at all, and a hundred other things. Best of all was the warm clasp with which she held her. And Bell, too, was pulling at her frock.

"Her mother's own child!" said Mrs. Harewood, pointing her out admiringly.

"Come, come!" said the squire loudly. "Here, Doll,

Lyd, take her up-stairs, can't you, and show her your dolls or whatever you have in those big cases of yours ? And you'll stop and dine, Mrs. Randolph ? I'll promise you black puddings—and Mrs. White's black puddings are not to be tasted every day of your life. Come—black puddings and a goose pie, and a venison-pasty to finish off with."

"Not to-day, squire," said Madam, shaking her head. "I am coming soon to have a dish of tea with your wife, but now, as soon as I have explained a matter or two about the cook-maid she wants, I must take my children home again. I never expected you to have come so early."

"Tis Deb's fear of highwaymen. She would not rest till she had got off."

Meanwhile, Doll and Lyd, two tall girls of thirteen and fourteen, were obediently taking the younger children to their rooms, and as soon as they were out of hearing and sight of their mother, Lyd began to talk loudly, in rather a grumbling voice.

"Companions indeed, and little things like that ! But I know what 'tis, mamma likes to go to my Lady Dennett's routs, and so we have to amuse her little miss. And this other, too ! Well, child, did you ever see such a fine house before ? "

Jeanne looked gravely at her.

"I have seen much prettier," she said.

"Hoity-toity, indeed! Do you hear, Doll? Why, do you know there is no house so big for miles round; and you should see the Vauxhall china mamma has brought home, and the Indian embroideries!"

Jeanne walked away to the window. Bell, who was more amenable, looked and admired till Lyd's heart was won. She kissed her and called her a dear little thing.

Doll, meanwhile, was standing in the middle of the room, looking cross.

"What's the matter, sister?" said Lyd, glancing up with a yawn.

"The matter! Well, 'tis a shame I should be mewed up here when I want to be out seeing the puppies, and old Snowball, and all the rest of them."

"Have you puppies?" asked Jeannette, moved to interest.

"Yes," said Doll, sulkily. "And I want to know whether the white one has got its shoulder all well; and now we shall have to stay in till after dinner."

Jeanne thought the girl was not very kind or pleasant, but she had much more sympathy with a grievance of this description than with Lyd's airs. And, young as she was, it showed that she had already learned some of the lessons which that Good Shepherd

Who carries His lambs in His Bosom would teach them, that she began to think what Marie, who was always kind, would have said in such a case.'

"Do you know Farmer Ford's sheep-dog?" she asked, confidentially. "The other day one of the poor little lambs strayed, and no one missed it except Shep. And he brought it back to its mother quite safely. He always lets me smooth him."

"My puppies are white," said Doll, still in an injured tone. "Lyd says they're ugly, but they're not. Lyd always says the things I like are ugly."

"And so they are," persisted Lyd. "Sure, when we were on our journey you could see nothing to admire but the horses which drew the Exeter fly. You are the maddest girl, Doll."

Doll retaliated on Lyd's love of fine clothes, and it seemed likely the two sisters would seriously fall out. Lyd was the youngest, but had a pert manner and sharp tongue, and Doll was unyielding and dogged. Bell seemed to take it all much as a matter of course which did not concern her, and amused herself with looking about the room, which would seem plain and rough enough to our ideas now, but for that time was rather unusually fitted.

Jeanne listened in dismay, for the courtesies of life in a French household were so tenderly guarded, that she

had never heard sisters fall out in this manner before. Clémentine was often disagreeable, but Marie never argued, only turned it off with her quiet gentleness. And here she began to think they would come to blows. 'But even here it was Doll who first pulled herself up. There was neither grace nor kindness in the manner in which she turned her shoulders to Lyd, but at any rate there was perhaps some self-restraint, for she let her sister pour out a succession of sharp last words, and stood looking, it is true, black as night, but silent till they had ended. And she said to Jeanne, when Mrs. Harewood's woman came to call the children—

"The next time you come here I'll show you the puppies."

Squire Harewood said to Madam Randolph before they left the house—

"A sharp little baggage that; but why should you be the ones to maintain her? Tell the parson to apply to some of the fine folk in London; why, they're having collections in the churches, and I don't know what, to keep the poor beggars who come, often enough, without a penny in their pockets."

"You might get something through Sir Martin, or a place as a little waiting-maid," put in his wife.

Madam nodded and laughed, and said they could do

very well without their assistances, and walked briskly away with the two children running by her.

“A fine stepping woman,” said the squire, looking after her admiringly.

“Mighty independent,” said Mrs. Harewood, tossing her head. “Most parsons’ wives would think more of their good luck in being free of a house like this. I am sure Lady Headman told me theirs never looked for such a thing. But then her husband has no more than 27*l.* a year and a horse, and that keeps them properly humble. I should have spoken more strongly against having that child up here if it had not entered my head that ‘twould be a good chance for Lyd and Doll to improve in their French.”

“Oh, pooh, let her come, of course!” said the squire, walking off. “D’ye think your precious girls are made of such fine ware that they’ll crack?”

## CHAPTER XVI.

## A BIT OF CAMBRIC.

JEANNETTE had a great deal to remark about her new acquaintances, more, indeed, than Bell, to whom the race was not so strange, and who saw nothing to wonder at in the manners which shocked Jeanne. Madam listened patiently and answered little, except now and then in one of her plain pithy sentences which seem to clear up puzzling things. She said briefly she thought poor Doll had an uncomfortable temper, but many good points, and managed to set Jeanne trying to find out the good points, thinking it a more wholesome exercise than the reverse. One effect this visit had : it brought out Bell in such a favourable contrast that Jeannette was delighted that she, and not one of the young ladies at the Court, was her companion, and it quickened her affection towards her. Bell herself was placidly content. It gave her no trouble that the parsonage was small, the rooms poorly furnished, and that her Aunt Bess wore simple dresses, and had not a paduasoy to her name ; nor did she think with any regret upon the greater splendours of Bloomsbury Square ; having her mother's simple and affectionate

nature, and a readiness to take people at their own estimate of themselves. It was this which had led to the engaging of the damsel of the bass viol.

To that same damsel, however, Mallaton appeared a slough of despond, the parsonage a miserable hovel, and Parson Randolph and his wife persons of so low a condition that they were scarcely entitled to civil treatment. Mrs. Prue had thought of the country as a place where Damon and Chloe repeated verses to each other, and shepherdesses walked about with crooks and pet lambs; but the mud of Mallaton and its appearance throughout, put these visions to flight for ever. The effect upon her temper was of the worst. She cried her eyes and her nose red, and felt that if she were turned into a fright, it was the fault of Mallaton. She would scarce look at poor Lizzie—who was quite scared by her grandeur—except now and then when she poured out upon her the compliments which my Lord So-and-So's valet had said to her. And to Madam she was downright insolent—once. It fell out on this fashion.

Bell, as it has been said, wanted to be dressed like Jeannette, and her aunt to please her set to work directly upon the little hood and cloak, and spared no time or trouble to get it ready for her. Bell, when it was finished, carried it away with her in triumph to bed, and never said anything of the reception it met with.

But the next day when Madam sent the two children to dress to go out with her, and bid Bell wear her new cloak, she was amazed to see her come down without it. And Bell's eyes were red with unaccustomed tears, though she would not say much. Madam, however, guessed something of the state of the case, and with Bell's hand in hers went straight to the room which served for both.

"Perhaps you did not understand, Mrs. Prue," she said to the maid, "that your young lady was to wear her red cloak."

"So she told me, madam," said Mrs. Prue, tossing her head; "but I made bold to think for myself that my lady would not be pleased to see her wearing other people's old clothes, and so kept to her own."

Madam Randolph had a quick temper; but it was one which could never flame out upon those beneath her in station, and she showed nothing of it now beyond a resolute look in her eyes. She sat down and said quietly—

"The carrier's cart passes to-morrow morning at five, and you can catch the stage-coach at Pyneham."

"Madam!"

"I will pay you your wages, and your fare to your own home. Either that, or remember that you will obey whatever orders are given you in this house."

"Sure, madam, I meant no harm," said Mrs. Prue, beginning to weep copiously.

"And none has been done to you. But I am mistress here, and Mr. Randolph master. If it is your intention to remain, be good enough to bring your young lady her cloak."

Mrs. Prue was vanquished, and showed no more resistance to Madam. But as she had a poor and spiteful nature, she revenged herself as much as she dared by spiting Jeannette. The child, who could not understand half her sharp speeches, was yet conscious of them, and wanted to know from Bell why she was always cross; but Bell treated it as nothing, or only as Mrs. Prue's way, and therefore to be borne with philosophy.

Meanwhile the two little friends were very happy together. No news had arrived for Jeanne, but it seemed as if no waiting daunted her hopes, and she was quite confident that one day a letter from her father would come to her out of the mail-bags. She did not in the least forget him, chattering to Bell over all the particulars of their life at Caen, and keeping it as warmly in her heart as if it were still hers, and still existing. Sometimes she insisted upon Bell personating one of her old playfellows; but as Bell had an utter absence of imagination, and could not—though she tried

very obediently—conceive what either Marie, Clémentine, or Barbe would have looked like, or spoken like, or done under certain circumstances, the attempt was always a failure, and had to be given up.

There was many another play, however, and for both children the bliss of spring in the country was unbounded. It came with delightful thrills of joy to them both. It brought young creatures for playfellows, daisies for chains, kingcups for golden balls. Little streams ran merrily through fields of such a green as Jeannette had never seen even in her dreams. Sheets of bluebells carpeted the woods, and white anemones starred the banks. Madam found it difficult to keep her charges at their lessons, and old Hobbs complained they could not say their tables for looking out of window. But when other persuasions failed, there was one inducement which never lost its power. Madam did not often use it; but sometimes she reminded Jeannette that it would be a pleasure to her father to find her working steadily. She did not say *if* he found her, she would not say anything to daunt the confidence of the hopeful little heart; but in her own mind she thought that Jeanne was but one of those solitary and friendless ones who were at this time apt to arrive in England, and there drift to some shelter, or perhaps out into the cold. Perhaps few people would have rejoiced as she did that

this friendless one had been brought to her door; and she was disposed to thank Peter Drake whenever she saw him for the discernment he had displayed.

Jeannette, on her part, felt a most warm and admiring affection for Madam. She was too young to understand all her causes of gratitude, even when Mrs. Prue talked of beggars' children, and the idea that they should be treated equal with her young lady'; but she very much wished to do something for her because she loved her so much, and the thought of the embroidered cap ran persistently in her head. Where could she get the muslin?

Her longing was, to work it unknown to any one, to put it into Madam's room, and never let her guess whose fingers had been busy. (Mysteries, alas! delightful as they seem, are almost always dangerous, and apt to bring trouble in their train.) Even Bell she would fain have kept out of the knowledge; but there was this difficulty, that she did not know where to turn for the muslin, and had no money in the world, and therefore it seemed necessary to get advice from somebody. Bell, too, was a very pleasant and sympathising *confidante*, always full of admiration for Jeanne's schemes, which it is quite certain would never have entered her own head.

"But the pattern! How could you manage to prick

it out? And, oh, Jeanne, will you not be tired before it is finished?"

"Perhaps," said Jeanne, decidedly. "I used to get tired when Marie showed me. But then I am much bigger now, and I know things. And that pattern we all of us learnt by heart. Except Barbe—big Barbe, who never could remember which way the leaves turned. Oh, Bell, if only I could get a little stuff!"

"I daresay Mrs. Prue has some in her work-drawer," said Bell, hopefully. "She has taken a letter over to the Court; but we can go and look, and I am sure I saw some muslin when last she opened it."

There accordingly they went, and there Bell pounced on a fine and delicate little piece of cambric which exactly answered to what was wanted, and gave Jeanne great satisfaction.

"But may we take it?" she said, looking wistfully at it, but drawing back.

"Yes, yes!" cried Bell, pressing it into her hands. "All the things are mamma's; I heard Prue say so. And mamma is so kind she would give you anything. See, here is some cotton—there, now you have everything; sure, we are lucky. If Prue asks, I can tell her."

All Jeannette's scruples went to the winds. It really did seem the most fortunate chance in the world

which put the little square in her way, and she set to work that very day to mark out the pattern she remembered on a piece of coarse whitey-brown paper, which, before the Huguenots brought a finer manufacture, was the only sort used in England. Bell looked over her shoulder, wondering and admiring. Jeannette's design was not quite correct in its drawing, but was really praiseworthy for her age, and they were so much interested that they did not hear Madam come into the room until her voice startled them.

"What are you puzzling your wise heads over, children?" she said, in her bright, brisk voice. But she looked curiously at them when she saw the effect her words produced. Bell started, Jeannette hastily crumpled the paper into her pocket, and turned scarlet. "Why, what now?" said Madam. She expected some answer; but when they only looked guiltily at each other, her voice grew a little short and displeased, nothing hurting her so much as want of trust from those she loved. And she would never ask for it. "I have something to tell you, Bell," she said, coldly. Jeannette noticed the change, Bell did not, and she jumped up and flung her arms round her aunt.

"Mamma is coming, that is your news, Aunt Bess!" she cried, and Madam's heart relented towards Di's child, who certainly loved her.

"No, little simpleton, 'tis nothing of the sort. 'Tis that you are asked on a visit."

"Oh, delightful!" said Bell, with her eyes opening. "But where to!"

"To the Court. Mrs. Harewood has sent to ask for you, and I have agreed to it."

"When, Aunt Bess?"

"To-morrow."

Madam Randolph glanced at Jeannette. She had come into the room vexed with Mrs. Harewood for making the difference between the children, and a little disposed to cosset Jeanne in consequence. But evidently Jeanne was concealing something, was not herself, and Madam was displeased and would say nothing. Bell, who liked novelty better than any of them, was overjoyed. She could think and talk of nothing else, rather to Jeannette's disgust, for she thought Bell need not have been so delighted to get away from her. But then she tried to think what Marie would have said and done, and thinking of that seemed to make it easier to understand Bell's pleasure, even to share it. And Bell was honestly longing that Jeanne had been able to go, only, as she might not, she could still enjoy herself, and bring back her experiences, and never think of grudging, either side.

"Why, Bell," said Parson Randolph, helping the sirloin at supper, "so you are to go visiting!"

"Yes, sir," said his niece, demurely.

"And Mrs. Prue goes with you?"

"No," said his wife. "'Tis time Bell were able to manage for herself, and so she is to make her first assay, and if she wants anything there are plenty of hands there."

So Mrs. Prue was left behind, rather to Jeannette's sorrow, for she felt disconsolate without her playfellow, and Mrs. Prue looked sourly at her, and did her best to find fault. It was only to be for three days, but children find it hard to look beyond the day, and Jeannette's heart went out in a cry to the Good Shepherd to send her father.

Moreover, during these three days the rain poured down persistently. The lanes were scarcely passable, and she was obliged to stay all day in the house. She had, however, one great delight—the thought of the cap, and though she had not yet ventured to begin it, she was always pricking away at the pattern, trying to get it quite right, and vexed with herself for not doing better. Unfortunately, Madam Randolph saw that she was concealing something, and thought of it uneasily. Jeannette no longer liked to be in the room with her, and often grew red and confused when she came upon

her unexpectedly. What could she have to conceal ? Madam, open as the day herself, had an absolute dread of deceit, and less mercy for it than for any other fault ; and she grew troubled, and doubtful of Jeanne.

It was on the second day of Bell's absence, that Jeannette, despairing of finding a corner in which to go on with her design, but yet undaunted, knelt down by a window in a long passage, a window of which the children were fond, as it looked across the village street towards the churchyard. The parsonage had no garden ; flower gardens were then little known in England, and the love of flowers, which afterwards became so marked, was in no small degree due to the Huguenots. But the village street was an object of interest at all times. There the carts lumbered along ; there the geese slowly waddled, on their way to the open ; there the children lingered, staring up at the parsonage, where Jeannette would often be nodding and kissing her hand. And across the road, in the pretty churchyard, under the branching elms, there might be seen the stone which marked where lay little Moll Drake, but for whose innocent remembrance Jeannette might never have seen Mallaton at all. So, though on this day the rain was falling heavily, and scarcely a living creature passed along the street, Jeanne chose the window as the most

cheerful place she could find, and as she had cut herself off from Madam, longed for Bell in vain.

She was sure now that she had the pattern right. There was one little twist and twirl in it which had given her no end of trouble, and over which her patience had been really creditable; and now she thought that she might venture to begin the work, perhaps astonish Bell by showing her how much she had done in her absence. Just then she heard a step approaching, and hastily thrust cambric, paper and all into her pocket, fearing that Madam was very near her secret. But it was not Madam. It was Mrs. Prue, coming to a cupboard in the wall close to where Jeanne was kneeling—Mrs. Prue, with her temper in no way improved by the fact that her young lady had gone to visit at the great house of the neighbourhood, and that she had not been permitted to accompany her.

“What are you doing here, child,” she said crossly, “hiding about in these sort of places? Mischief—of that one may be sure. ‘Tis a marvel, sure, that Madam Randolph should keep such brats in the house, and let her own niece company with them! Out you should pack if I had the settling of it. There, budge, can’t you, and let me come?”

Jeannette had grown crimson. She stood without moving, her breath coming quickly.

“Do you hear, child ?”

Then the storm broke forth.

“You are a rude, bad woman,” cried Jeannette, passionately. “I will tell Madam; I will tell Bell; they shall send you away.”

“Hoity-toity, so these are your French manners ! Marry, come up; but a good whipping is what you want ! And what are you hiding there ?”

Jeannette said nothing; she stood still breathing fast, her eyes riveted on Prue. But when the latter tried to snatch at her pocket, she fought with the desperation of a little wild cat, scarcely indeed knowing what she did, in fierce defence of her treasures. It was of no use. Mrs. Prue easily mastered her, and holding her wrists with one hand, she drew out with the other the contents of her pocket.

“Why, I protest !” she exclaimed in mingled astonishment and anger, “I protest if here is not my piece of fine lawn for which I have been searching high and low ! It was you, miss, who was the thief, was it ? Good luck, to think how much else may not have gone the same road ! This comes of having strange brats in the house, and perhaps now it will be seen who was in the right. Have you nothing to say for yourself, you deceitful creature ?”

No ; Jeanne said nothing. She stood still, every

now and then shaken by Mrs. Prue's strong hand, quite helpless, but passionately indignant; yet resolved, if taking the lawn had been so wrong an act, to say nothing which should accuse Bell.

"To Madam you shall come this moment," cried Mrs. Prue; "we shall see if this does not open her eyes, and make her trundle you off to the poor's house, if 'tis not to the lock up."

Jeannette drew a long breath. Madam would understand. She had no fear. And at this moment, Madam's step was heard coming along the passage.

"Why, what is this to-do?" she asked, having caught the sound of high words.

"To-do, Madam!" exclaimed Mrs. Prue. "Well, 'tis nothing less than thieving, and she so young! You may please to remember that I spoke of having lost a piece of fine cambric which was to be used for my master's ruffles, and where should I find it now but in her pocket! She has flown at me like a little fury. Look at her face, Madam, is it not a sight?"

Poor Jeanne! It was true that all the anger and passion which had shaken her still burned in her eyes; and when Madam turned sadly and wonderingly towards her, she burst into a storm of tears. It was the doubt she saw in Madam's face, of which she had never thought, which overwhelmed her.

"And perhaps, Madam, the silver nutmeg I have heard you inquire for, has gone the same road—" Mrs. Prue began in her high-pitched voice, but Madam stopped her by raising her hand.

"That will do, Mrs. Prue," she said; "the silver nutmeg lies at this moment on my table. I am sorry for this matter of the lawn, and Jeanne must explain how she came by it."

But Jeanne was past all explanations. The storm which swept over her seemed to leave no room for anything but a swelling sense of injustice, a passionate resentment that Madam, whom she so loved, should doubt her for a moment, and speak to her in this stern, grave manner. And Mrs. Randolph herself was feeling sorely hurt. She was conscious of greatly disliking Mrs. Prue, and the consciousness made her fear that she might act unfairly by her. And all the uncomfortable doubts which had been lately vexing her about Jeannette, the want of openness she had noticed, the avoidance of her own company, her silence—now filled her with dread.

"Jeanne," she said, coldly, "it will be best for you to speak." But as nothing came of this appeal, she touched her on the shoulder. "Come with me," she said.

"Yes, go, miss, and make a clean breast of it. There'll be plenty to tell," said Mrs. Prue, sniffing.

If anything had been wanted to harden Jeannette, that was the last touch.

Madam found her obstinately silent. She would say nothing, confess nothing, deny nothing. No signs of penitence being visible, and no explanations forthcoming, Madam would relax nothing of her severity. It was partly the feeling that it would be mean to bring Bell into the scrape, partly a determination never to reveal her secret, but chiefly a proud and angry obstinacy which kept Jeanne mute. And it was a great dislike to anything underhand or deceitful, and a sore disappointment at not being trusted which made Madam cold and severe. She turned away at last impatiently.

"Since you will not speak, there is no use in my remaining. You had better go to your bed, and lie there until to-morrow."

Oh, bitter hours, while, wide awake, she lay, with what she thought the injustice of her sentence rankling in her heart! Lizzie came up with prisoner's fare for her supper, and looked curiously at her, feeling that old Hobbs's opinion of they Frenchies was likely to be right after all. For Lizzie was an awestruck admirer of Mrs. Prue; listening open-mouthed to her tales of grand London doings, and hoping for patronage on her own account. She had no sympathy with Jeannette, and set the food down with a thump.

Down-stairs, Madam was pacing up and down uneasily. "If she would only speak out and own her fault one could deal with it," she said to herself. "The child has got so dear to me that I acknowledge 'tis a sharp disappointment to think of her deceiving. And what could she have taken it for? 'Tis possible it may have been some silly mischief at the first, but then not to speak out freely! And all that hiding away I have noticed of late. 'Tis so bad for my Bell, and 'twill grieve her tender heart to see her friend in trouble: I have a mind to ask Mrs. Harewood to keep her another day or two until the worst is over."

Madam would never disturb her husband with matters which fell under her own rule, but that evening at supper he could not but notice little Jeanne's absence, and she told him the story.

"Sure, Harrington," she said with a smile, and yet a tear in her eye, "you are a magistrate—what do you do with the culprits who won't confess?"

"Nay, Bess, I expect your persuasions are stronger than our stocks."

She shook her head.

"Mine make no impression. And truly, I scarce know what to do. Though we do not love Mrs. Prue, there is no fault of hers here that I can see; and though Jeannette is so little she has had good and careful

training. She would understand the sin of taking what was not hers as well as you or I could understand it."

"Is Bell mixed up in it?"

"Bell!" cried Madam, indignantly. "As if it were possible!"

"Yet Bell has been with her constantly. And you complained they both got out of your way."

"Do you suppose that Di's child could be dishonest?" said Madam, drawing herself proudly up, with her eyes flashing, and the red colour in her cheeks.

"Nay, dear life, I suppose nothing. But I am certain my Bess would never be wilfully unjust, and it appears to me that here appearances touch both alike."

"If Bell had been with us this would never have happened," said Madam, emphatically; "but now I am disposed to keep her a little longer at the Court. Jeanne must be punished, and 'twould be a grief to Bell to see it. I will send over to-morrow morning."

## CHAPTER XVII.

## A TANGLE OF MRS. PRUE'S.

**JEANNE** slept soundly, and awoke in the morning with a remembrance which comforted her—Bell was coming home that day, and if Bell consented, the whole story might be told. She wanted some comfort, for otherwise everything would have been miserable. No one spoke to her, except that Madam set her lessons and told her shortly that she was not to leave the house. The day was bright and sunny; everything seemed to be crying out for her to come; Peter Drake drove slowly by, looking round to see if the little red figure were not waiting for him; Mrs. Prue swept her clothes out of the way when she passed by Jeanne. And as the hours dragged by, and the sun sank, and no Bell appeared, Jeannette grew very unhappy indeed. She ventured at last to ask Lizzie, who passed by in a hurry, where she was.

“Miss Bell’s a stopping on to the Court; you’re no fit company for her, and Mrs. Prue has been over this morning to say so. I’m sure I should be ‘shamed if I was you;” and Lizzie marched on, trying to copy Mrs. Prue’s air.

This was dreadful. Bell was not coming; and though she had seen Mrs. Prue, she had sent no message of deliverance. Almost the sharpest pang of all came to her with this knowledge; bitter tears rushed to her eyes, and she cried out piteously upon her father, as she always did when any sadness seized her. But although she thought Bell mean and shabby, she was glad she had not told of her share. "And I never will!" she cried, bursting into sobs. If she could only have seen what happened at the Court!

When Mrs. Prue appeared there she was had up to the room where Bell slept, and where Doll was standing, with her face flattened against the window panes, as usual, displeased with somebody or something.

"But 'tis too early, I am not ready," said Bell in dismay.

"Oh, my dear young lady," said Mrs. Prue, holding up her hands, "'tis not that! 'Tis to warn you against coming home that I have been sent. Your aunt wishes you to stay, if Mrs. Harewood consents—and, I am sure, proud should I be to wait upon you in a fitting house like this! But as for your coming back to that wicked little creature, 'tis not to be thought of, and so I made bold to tell Madam."

"Jeanne is not wicked," said Bell, calmly. "What do you mean, Mrs. Prue?"

"Ah, my sweet miss, you do not know her. What do I mean? Why, that she has taken what does not belong to her, and if she were not so young might be clapt into prison."

Bell took this announcement very composedly, being used to Mrs. Prue's statements. But something made her cry out—

"'Tis not the bit of muslin, Prue? I can tell Aunt Bess all about that."

Mrs. Prue was sorely discomposed. She was not a wicked woman, and yet here her spite made her wicked, for it would have been dreadful to her to carry back the news of Jeanne's innocence, after her own protestations. She said, hastily—

"Never mind what it is about, Mistress Bell; nothing that you know anything of, you may be sure. And here is a letter from my lady which came yesterday."

She hurried away, fearful of hearing more, and knowing that Bell would be taken up with her mother's letter. And when Madam anxiously asked her what Bell had said, she answered—

"Indeed, Madam, she seemed no way surprised, and inquired if 'twere the piece of muslin."

Alas, what worse could have been said! Madam turned sadly away. Meanwhile, Doll, standing before the window and drumming with her fingers on the

glass, had lost none of Mrs. Prue's words. She did not say anything at first, but Bell, folding up her letter with a skip of delight, heard in Doll's deep, rather glum voice—

“I'm glad I'm not a fine lady to have a woman like that.”

“I'm not a fine lady,” said Bell, with a little vexation.

“Sure you are. Mamma always talks of Lady Dennett, so I know. But that Mrs. Prue would sicken me with her flatteries and her spite.”

“Oh, Doll!” said Bell, rather aghast, “do you think she meant it? Do you think Jeanne has done anything naughty?”

“I daresay,” Doll said, with a sigh. She was so often in scrapes herself that it did not seem impossible by any means to her. “But that woman of yours was glad.”

Bell was somehow troubled. It was very seldom that anything troubled her, she being easily pleased, and not quickly moved, but it was true that Mrs. Prue's manner had been odd, and could it be possible that the [reason she gave for her not returning home that day was the true one? She came over to Doll's side, and stood looking out disconsolately.

“Perhaps Madam Harewood would suffer us to go

over to Mallaton," she began; but at this moment Lyd burst in—

"Papa says we may go with him over to my Lord Cobham's, but that he'll wait for nobody. Quick, Bell, 'tis a grand house, and always full of fine gentlemen. If my hat were only fresh quilted, as mamma promised!—good lack, how faded 'tis! Bell, yours is not too small, and you love to oblige—do you wear your pretty cloak, and lend me your hat. There now, if you will, I will give you—let me see——"

"Oh, to be sure, I am glad you thought of it," said Bell, hastening cheerfully to extract her pretty hat for Mrs. Lyd's benefit. "Is there anything you would like, Doll?"

"No," said Doll; "I am not such a popinjay as Lyd."

"A popinjay, indeed! Sure you are civil, sister! And if it had not been for me you would never have gone."

This was true, and Doll's face had cleared when she heard of the prospect, for she liked nothing better than a walk with her father and the dogs, though the fine gentlemen with whom he would probably sit and drink for an hour were less to her taste. But the two sisters could scarcely be together without bickering. In a minute or two, however, another thought struck her. She said doubtfully to Bell—

"Are you sorry not to go to Mallaton? Because, if you like, I will stay and go with you, and the keeper's daughter could walk over with us."

Bell hesitated. But she, too, wished to take this walk to Lord Cobham's; and, after all, how was it possible that little Jeannette could be in serious trouble?

"No," she said, slowly. "'Twas Prue's tongue, I daresay, and no more."

"Come," said Lyd, briskly; "Doll, you are never ready; you will be left behind." And she danced out of the room without paying any more attention to her companions.

And Jeannette at the parsonage passed a dreary, dreary day, and, as the evening came on, and Lizzie's information quelled the hopes which had kept her up, and it seemed as if Bell were afraid to own her part in the transaction, things grew darker and darker. Still she would not speak, Bell's treachery not seeming to herself an excuse for doing so; but she cried herself to sleep, and, little as she knew it, Madam cried too when she came up and saw the tears lying yet on the little face.

"Yet what can I do, Harrington?" she said, going quickly back to him. "While she shows no sign of repentance 'twould not be right to favour her again.

And yet—no one knows how hard 'tis for me to keep her thus in disgrace. My heart smites me the more because of her friendlessness; and the little creature looks so at me!"

"Your heart is in general a good guide, Bess. But if the matter is proved beyond dispute, as you say it is, and she will say nothing, I know not what's to be done. Myself I think 'twould be best to have Bell home and learn what she can tell."

"Bell knows nothing," said Madam, impatiently. "And Prue was there to-day and told her, and brought back no word but what seems to make it worse. Why will you ever be thinking that my poor Bell has aught to do with it? Sure, I am glad she is out of the broil."

"I leave the children to you," said he, smiling. "Goody Jones wants some herb tea to-morrow, and I promised you should make it for her. And make it good, for if she is troubled with many more aches and pains, she will be swearing old Moll Brown hath bewitched her, and coming to me for a warrant."

In spite of what she had said, Madam Randolph made up her mind to go to the Court herself the next day, and hear whether Bell could throw any light upon the affair of the cambric. But she was called upon to start off in quite an opposite direction, where her skill in doctoring was needed for a bad case of convulsions.





"It was too far for her to walk, and she set off on old Snowball, riding pillion behind her husband."—Page 265.

It was too far for her to walk, and she set off on old Snowball, riding pillion behind her husband. Jeanette watched her sadly from a distance; she was no longer confined to the house, no one seemed to care whether she went or stayed, and the child's heart was very sore with a strong sense of injustice, and the loneliness of desertion. She walked listlessly about; Peter Drake was out of the village; every one seemed too busy or too indifferent to speak to her. Old Hobbs came up to hear her lessons, and shook his head, and was sure she had been a very bad little miss; the tables all went wrong, the writing was blurred with her tears; there was no Madam to whisper, "for father's sake," and her usual hopefulness had deserted her. Where was her father? where was Claude? Had they all forgotten her? Ah, if she could only see them again! They would know she had not done that wicked thing. Why, even old Janson—if he were there—how much nicer he would be than old Hobbs! In France they were nice, all kind, while here they were all—yes, even Madam was cruel.

So the hours dragged heavily along in sad and solitary fashion. Bell thought again of asking permission to go to Mallaton, but some other plan of amusement turned up, and she put it off, making sure, in her easy fashion, that things must have come right.

In the evening Jeanne heard the man riding down the street with the mail-bags; she knew it was he because no one else clattered fast through the town, but she listened with dull want of interest. Nevertheless, for the first time there was something in the bags which related to her, and after she was in bed Madam Randolph came up and sat by its side. She said—

“Jeanne, I have heard something of a young gentleman who I think may be the Mr. Claude that brought you to England.” She spoke gravely and coldly, but it touched her heart to see Jeannette’s spring in her bed, the clasping of her hands, and the gladness in the blue eyes, and she longed more than she could say to have taken her in her arms and held her there while she told her story. And after all, the story was not much, and ended in disappointment. It seemed that Lady Dennett had writ in haste to her dearest Bess to say that among her friends in Bath, she heard of a young Frenchman who had been there with friends that winter, and whose story had made a talk in the town. It was one M. Claude Hamon, the son of a Huguenot pastor who had taken refuge at Amsterdam. This young man escaped to England, taking with him a little girl, but the vessel was wrecked on the coast of Devon, and he only escaped by a miracle. The child was also brought to shore, but while he went to seek

assistance, mysteriously disappeared. All his endeavours to find her had proved fruitless; he had lingered on the spot searching all the coast, but without the smallest success. At last, giving it up in despair, and believing she must somehow have been swept away again by the sea, he had made his way to his friends in Bath, and there, what with grief and exposure, had fallen ill and been like to die. It was long before he recovered, and he remained most full of sorrow, because accusing himself of having left her alone on the shore, and unable to bear the thoughts of her father's sorrow. "In fine," wrote Lady Dennett, "the story agreed so unmistakably with your little Jeanne's, that you may judge whether I were not all impatience to see the young man for myself, and imagine my dismay to find he hath quitted the town! 'Tis thought he hath gone to meet some of his religion in London, but the friends he was with are also departed, though not, it is said, with the same end in view."

Lady Dennett's letter ended by sending her sister an admirable recipe against the plague, which might also serve for the measles, being composed of Malmsey, rue, spices, Angelica water, and other wonderful compounds, which she hoped her dearest Bess would keep in the house to be ready in case of need.

Jeannette's heart was swelling. At any other time

the hearing of Claude's name alone would have been a delight in which hope would have been scarcely dulled by doubt of his coming, but now—the disappointment was too sharp for endurance — she turned away from Madam with a look of mute reproach, and buried her face in the pillow. Madam touched her gently.

“Jeanne,” she said, in a quick voice. But Jeanne made no sign. “Why will you not speak? why will you not say you are sorry you did that wicked thing? Will you tell me at least *why* you did it?”

A strong impulse came into Jeanne's mind, but, strange to say, it was this very feeling of renewed love for Madam which kept her silent. “She will be more sorry about Bell,” she thought, “and then I shall never be able to surprise her with the cap.”

And so she still remained mute, and Madam, chilled and disappointed, stood up. “You are punishing yourself, Jeanne,” she said sadly. “You cannot be happy while you are unforgiven, and how can I forgive while you will not confess? I am very sorry for you. I do not mean to punish you any more, but if you loved me you would not grieve me as you are doing now.”

It was the strongest argument she had used. As she turned and walked slowly out of the little room, it was

all that Jeanne could do not to jump up and cry after her, "Oh, Madam, it was Bell took it, not I!" If she had, all would have been right; but Jeanne really believed it would have been mean and unkind to do so, and so she lay still, and then broke into a piteous fit of sobbing. Was it not dreadful that she should have this to bear? Was it not dreadful that Claude should have been so near finding her, and yet that it was all missed? Oh, would not the Good Shepherd, Whom her father had said would take care of her, come now and make it all right? Would He ask Madam to be kind again? Would He tell her father and Claude where to find her? Would He——but before that last petition was framed little Jeanne was fast asleep.

The morning, however, seemed to bring but little comfort. Things went on, it is true, much as usual; Madam Randolph took her lessons as before, and set her her seam to sew, and was only grave. Jeannette went out and ran in the long lane, gathered primroses, and had a ride in Peter Drake's cart. Still, there seemed a difference everywhere. It was best with Peter, who knew nothing, and was in a more communicative mood than was common with him. He said something once about his little maid, and Jeanne caught at it.

"Have you a little maid, Peter?" she asked, eagerly.

"I never knew that. Oh, I wish she would come and play with me."

There was a pause. Then he said in a hoarse voice, "Her woan't never do that. Her lieth in the choorch-yard, nigh to the big elem."

Another pause. Jeannette stole a glance at Peter, and thought how sorry he seemed. She said presently, with a sigh, "Then the Good Shepherd has taken her? I wish He would take me too."

"Doan't you go for to say that," said Drake, looking round quickly and jealously. "The missus be kind to you, bain't her? Ef I thort her worn't——" he added under his breath.

"I want father," said Jeanne wearily; "father and Claude. And they will both be so sorry because they have lost me."

Drake whipped on his horse. He began to think he had made a mistake after all; but it was like some other mistakes, made and not to be undone. Jeannette returned to the subject of Moll, in whose fate she felt much interest and curiosity.

"Was she ever naughty? did you scold her?" she demanded.

Peter Drake shook his head. The innocent questions pierced him like a knife.

"Did her mother?" persisted Jeanne, feeling as if she wanted to hear of some other sufferer.

"Ees; and beat her!"

He said it so sharply, so fiercely even, that Jeannette was frightened into silence. The cart bumped on over the rough roads, the birds were singing gaily in the hedges, which the blackthorn powdered as if with snow; and she sat, looking forwards, her small hands crossed lightly on her lap, her thoughts wandering to little Moll—little Moll whom they loved and yet beat—little Moll lying now under the churchyard elm.

The two jogged on in silence. But Peter Drake was a good deal disturbed; he jerked at the old horse, and every now and then drove on at an unaccustomed pace. It seemed as if his impatience or unrest wanted some vent. He had business at a farm, the farmer came out, and they talked about prices and crops till Jeannette was fairly tired. Yet she was sorry when they were near home again, for out in the cart her trouble seemed to lie more lightly. Peter Drake had not lost his odd humour. He was walking by the side of the cart when he pulled up for Jeanne to get down, but was impatient with something the horse did or did not do, and jerked the reins again with violence. The horse swerved just as Jeanne was on the shaft, she lost her

balance and fell heavily—fell against a heap of stones, and lay there senseless. Drake hurried round and lifted her in his arms, but she did not move. Lizzie, who had seen the fall, ran out screaming.

“Hold yer tongue, ye simpleton,” said Drake, fiercely. But his face was deadly white. Was she dead?

## CHAPTER XVIII.

## THE TANGLE UNDONE.

**MADAM** was so miserable about Jeanne's disgrace and silence that she determined resolutely to go to the Court that morning and hear whether Bell could really tell her anything. If the child were obstinately resolved not to speak she could not force her, but for her sake it was far better that matters should not be allowed to continue as they had remained during the past days. And something in Jeannette's look the evening before haunted her uneasily.

There had been a slight frost in the night; enough to check vegetation, but not to do more than brighten and invigorate the air. Down in little hollows things were pushing themselves, the trees lay in beautifully rounded masses waiting for the fuller touch of spring; far away, blue hills swept in delicate outlines; in the grass land which ran up towards the Court the lambs were leaping.

Mrs. Harewood came bustling into the room where Madam was ushered.

"These cook-maids will drive me distraught! One must see to everything, or, good lack! it all goes

wrong. There's the quince syrup turned off, and yesterday Mr. Harewood was quite put out of temper by the cinnamon toasts sent up almost cold. Upon my life 'tis enough to make one wish one lived in a small house such as yours, my good Mrs. Randolph!"

Madam smiled; she knew very well that Mrs. Harewood dearly loved a little speech of this kind, and it was one to which she was quite indifferent. She said—

"Nay, take care! If some spiteful fairy carried out the wish, where would you be? But if your maids are troublesome it has been the greater kindness of you to keep our Bell so long? I am come now to fetch her away, and to thank you for your care."

"For my Lady Dennett or for you I should always be glad to do a good turn, more especially with the child, such a pretty-behaved little creature as 'tis. But—excuse me, Mrs. Randolph—sure you are not going to have her home with that badly disposed little baggage of yours? I say, with Mrs. Prue, 'twould be a shame!"

"Prue cannot contain her tongue," said Madam, with vexation, and a longing to take Jeanne's side, right or wrong. "I told her she was to deliver my message and not stay to gossip about it. As for that matter, 'tis not cleared up one way or the other, and I hope

'twill not prejudice you against the poor little woman, who is so friendless."

"Prejudice!" repeated Mrs. Harewood, drawing herself up, "'tis scarce prejudice to refuse my children's company to one who, though so young, shows so much inclination to evil!"

"My little Jeanne!" said Madam very softly.

"Lyd is so observant and knowledgeable that I have no fears of her; but Doll — ! I can never impress her position upon her; she will be as friendly with the keeper's brats as with little ladies of standing, and happier with the dogs than either. I most despair of her ever mending. They are down at the fish-ponds now, if you are really in need of your Bell."

The Court, like other houses of its time, though well furnished with land, had no flower garden. The ponds lay at a little distance; from the house it was just possible to catch a glimpse of the blue water, and the fine growth of trees that were scattered about. It was always a favourite place with the children at all seasons of the year, and Doll and her dogs were at their noisiest as Madam came into the midst of them with her firm springy step. Bell rushed towards her in transport.

"Aunt Bess! Have you really come for me yourself? And where is Jeannette?"

“She is at home. Are you ready to come with me, my Bell? Perhaps Doll and Lyd might walk with us, and I will send them back with the person who comes to pack your clothes.”

Doll, with the dogs tearing after her, rushed off to ask for leave without even waiting to thank Madam; Lyd began to complain of her sister’s want of manners, until Madam stopped her very shortly. And then Bell put the question which really lay uneasily on her mind.

“Are you vexed with Jeanne for anything, Aunt Bess?”

“’Tis a long story, and has grieved me greatly. I hope, Bell, if you know aught about it you will speak freely, and help me to a right understanding, for Jeannette will say nothing. Mrs. Prue told you something of it, did she not?”

“No,” said Bell, shaking her dark curls.

“No? Think again,” said Madam gravely, and feeling her heart sink; “she brought me back a message which fitted in with it all, and made it worse for Jeanne.”

“No,” repeated Bell sturdily. “I was fearful ’twas the bit of cambric which I gave her, and I asked Prue, and told her I could tell you all about it, but she said ’twas nothing that I knew anything about. I sent no other message, Aunt Bess.”

A sudden light came into Madam's eyes.

"The bit of cambric!—but that is the very matter! And Prue told you—But, quick, let me hear all you can say. *You* took it, and gave it to Jeanne?"

"It all belonged to mamma, and she always allowed me to take anything I wished for, as Prue knows," said Bell without hesitation, "so when Jeanne told me how much she wanted the muslin of course I gave it to her. Oh, Aunt Bess, has Jeanne been blamed? But Prue said 'twas nothing I knew anything about. And why did not Jeanne say 'twas I gave it?"

"Perhaps she thought 'twould be bringing you into trouble, the generous little heart!" said Madam, much moved. "Tell me, Bell, why did she want it, and why not have asked me?"

"Ah, that is her secret," said Bell mysteriously.

"Well, well, I'll ask nothing. I fear we have all misjudged her—but Mrs. Prue! Ah, here is Doll, now we'll not lose a minute;" and indeed, Madam, in the impatience of her heart, walked so fast along the lanes that the children could hardly keep up with her.

They talked in low voices, Doll being particularly interested in remembering her own impression of Mrs. Prue's dislike to Jeanne, and Bell stirred a little out of her usual contentment by the pricking of her conscience. For if she had spoken at first as she had

promised to do, all the mistake would have been avoided; or if she had gone over to Mallaton when she heard that her little companion was in trouble, she could at once have set it right. It was a good lesson for little Bell, whose easy complacency might have led on to selfish indolence, for she had one of those characters which trust to things coming right, without taking any trouble in the matter. Lyd thought 'twas of no great consequence, but Doll was gruffly sympathetic, and ready to make an offering of her best beloved puppy, if it would comfort Jeanne.

They were not far from Mallaton when they saw a woman in a steeple-crowned hat coming running along the road towards them. Bell cried out in wonder—

“Why, 'tis Lizzie! What can she be seeking?”

Madam Randolph quickened her steps when she made out who it was, having an immediate presentiment of trouble; and Lizzie reached her breathless and gasping—

“Lack-a-day, madam, 'tis a mercy you are come, for the poor little creature has never moved, and Parson Randolph's out, and Mistress Prue says she must die without she's bled this instant, and—”

“Peace, Lizzie,” said Madam faintly. “Let me hear in a word what has happened.”

“In a word” was to expect too much, but loss of

breath did something towards shortening the tale, and Madam got to know what had happened, while the children clustered round awestruck, and noticed how white she grew. She said never a word to one of them, but walked on rapidly, while Lizzie poured out a torrent of dismal expectations to her eager listeners. Madam meanwhile swept on and up to the room where Jeanne was lying, with Mrs. Prue stooping over her, and Peter Drake standing mute at the door. The woman began to exclaim, but Madam stopped her.

“Leave the room at once,” she said, “yours is the last face that she should see.”

And there was something in her eye and voice so stern, that Mrs. Prue dared not expostulate, but retired to hysterics in the kitchen.

“Now then,” said Madam quietly, “how did this happen, Peter?”

She listened attentively, and pushed back the golden hair from a bruise on the forehead, and then looked up at him where he stood with a wild unspoken dread in his face. “No, she is not dead, only stunned. Go down and stop if you will until she comes round, for you have a heart in you, and care for her;” and Drake retired much comforted, Madam having the reputation of being the best doctor in the neighbourhood.

Then Madam set to work with her remedies, and all

she did was done with a tender touch, and a softness in her eyes, and such a pitifulness in her manner as those who knew her best knew she never showed except when she was greatly touched. When Jeannette opened her eyes, what she saw was Madam leaning over her with this look shining in her face.

“ My little Jeanne ! There, hush, not a word ! There is something for thee to drink, and now close thine eyes, and go to sleep, and wake up well. I shall stay by thee.”

As she did. Lyd and Doll went home escorted by Lizzie, and Bell wandered about the house, feeling very disconsolate, and beginning to picture what must have been Jeanne’s loneliness while she was in disgrace ; (for Lizzie, having a firm persuasion that she was going to die, immediately proceeded to exalt her virtues and enlarge upon her sorrows), but Madam sat patiently watching, blaming herself the while for not having followed her husband’s advice, and sought for an explanation from Bell.

The sun was setting before Jeanne awoke. All the western heavens were glowing with strange unfathomable depths of gold, and catching the red stone of the old church, the light brought out all the hidden colour and sharpened every line, and fell softly on little Moll’s headstone. Jeannette stirred slightly and said in a

murmur, "*Mon père!*" Then her eyes unclosed, and she looked wonderingly at Madam, and Madam kissed her.

"Are you better? Can you hear what I want to tell you? Bell is here, and she has told me all about it, and we know that you did not take the cambric. My poor Jeanne!"

"Has Bell told?" said Jeannette eagerly. "But you are not angry with her?"

"Angry, no! You should have told me, my child—but I am not going to scold you, I am going to bring Bell, and let her sit by you, and to-morrow everything will be happy again."

It was a real happiness to the two children to meet again. Jeanne's days had been very desolate, and Bell was ashamed of her own thoughtlessness and longed to try to make up for it; and when the most important matter had been talked out, and Jeanne satisfied by hearing that her secret was still safe, and the surprise for Madam yet possible, although her head ached with its hard bump, she liked to lie still and listen to all Bell's descriptions of life at the Court, and to have Doll's offer of the puppy repeated.

Madam that evening knelt down by her husband's chair.

"Harrington, you were right and I was wrong again,"

she said in an odd voice. "But my Bell was not to blame!"

"Somebody else was," said Parson Randolph. "My dear, I do not think crewels, or bass viols, or any marvellous accomplishments should be allowed to balance such spite. I consider that she should be sent away to-morrow; and you can write to your sister Dennett, and ask whether she will despatch another woman from Bath, or bear with a farm-girl here. I do not wish this to be overlooked."

"And I am sure I had better not go against you again," said his wife meekly.

"Make her comprehend 'twas not for the first mistake, which was excusable; but for the malice of wresting words which would have cleared her. 'Tis that I cannot put up with, and do not think we should."

So Mrs. Prue, very much crestfallen and tearful, departed in the carrier's cart, to which she objected strongly, as beneath her dignity.

Those were happy days for Jeannette which followed. It seemed as if Madam—who had a horror of injustice—could not do enough to show her confidence. Bell's love, too, had got a substance into it which was wanting before. Mrs. Prue, with her contemptuous airs, was gone, and until they heard from Lady Dennett, a stout

and rosy girl was had in from a neighbouring farm to supply her place, which she did with a superabundance of good-will and cheerfulness which made up for lack of knowledge. Jeannette toiled away at her cap, pricking her fingers over it with much contentment; and Madam, aware that there was a mystery she was not to try to fathom, shut her eyes determinedly, and did not see even so much as she might. Happy days indeed! With the spring coming on with a gaiety of sunshine which is often wanting; with the catkins unfolding ready to be carried to church on Palm Sunday; with Doll's puppy (pressed on Jeanne by his mistress) gambolling round them, always getting into every one's way, always hopeful as to the friendship of those he met, both men and dogs, and in no way daunted by rebuffs—what could be wished for more, except the one thing which was needed to make Jeanne quite happy—news of her father and Claude? No more had been heard. Lady Dennett at Bath had made inquiries, but perhaps her easy unenergetic nature had not put much vigour into the inquiries; at any rate nothing had come of them, and Claude's friends having left Bath, his address was not to be had. Madam's own belief inclined to a fear that Dr. Maury had been seized in an attempted flight, and sent, like so many others, to the galleys; and as from time to

time terrible news reached England of the horrors of these galleys, and the sufferings of those chained to the oars and condemned to the company of the vilest criminals, she felt that, if it were so, it was better for Jeanne's happiness, as she grew older and could understand the horrors of such a fate, that she should never know it.

But still the child's hopes showed no signs of flagging. It was unreasoning, doubtless, but might it not be the gift of that Lord Whom in her simple words she asked, night and morning, to take care of father and of Claude, and to bring them quickly? Every treasure she had they were to see; every pleasant walk she would show them—they were never out of her life or forgotten.

The only person who showed any dislike to Jeanne was Mrs. Harewood, who would not be persuaded but that she was a most unfit companion for my Lady Dennett's daughter; and Lyd was disposed to treat her with contempt. But Doll developed a sturdy liking, and was supported by her father, who said roundly 'twas the prettiest and best-mannered little wench for miles away, and took the trouble to set some inquiries on foot among his friends. So that she came and went freely at the Court, though never with the same delight as when she was alone with Madam and Bell.

And now the day approached when the work would be finished and ready for its giving. Jeanne had been up early every morning, sitting up in her bed and stitching away, though once or twice the fingers had dropped, the little head fallen back, and a sound sleep put an end to all efforts. Still there it was. It did not quite content her — Marie's skilful fingers were needed to set some difficulties right, and Jeannette was not always patient over her difficulties; but love had worked at it, and Madam's eyes would be sure to see the love and not the imperfections. The little leaves twined themselves very daintily, and Bell's admiration was enthusiastic.

"Now if I had thought for a month 'twould never have entered my head to make such a thing for mamma, and if I had thought I could not have done it. Why, Jeanne, it could not have been nicer."

"Oh, yes, it could," said Jeannette, chattering away in French, as Madam liked her to do to Bell, and shaking her head wisely. "If you had ever seen Marie's work you would know. There was a stitch she did which even Madam Hamon could not equal, and when I see the spiders' webs I think of that stitch of Marie's. If she were here she would do a little piece for me. Still—I don't know—perhaps Madam would like better that it should be all my own."

"Yes, sure," Bell said heartily. "But tell me more about the Hamons."

"Ah, you should see the garden and the trees, and the streets so busy, and all the ships in the river! Long ago, when I was little, we used to go and walk on the quay, do you know? But not for a long time, because father was so afraid that the people should carry us away."

"Why?" inquired Bell, opening her eyes. "Were there gipsies there?"

"No. They were angry because we did not go to mass, and that made them very unkind and wish to shut us up. They carried Modeste quite away."

"I heard father tell mother that if the king had his way all would go to mass in England," said Bell. "I wonder then if they would ever be so cruel? Father said the Parliament would not let him do as he liked."

"Is London town like Caen streets?" asked Jeanne, whose mind was always actively picking up food in the shape of information.

"'Tis a great big place," replied Bell, considering; "full of coaches, and noise, and people all pushing. The mercers and selling-folk call their wares; and 'tis such a confusion, you would be terrified except you were in a coach. Sometimes mamma, with a beautiful long train, goes away to breakfast with a gay lady, and

papa in his periwig to the levee, and I have little misses to spend the day with me. Is it not finished, Jeanne?"

"Look, there is just that little leaf to be done, and I am so fearful I should be in a hurry and spoil it. That is what I used to do. See here, Bell, one day we were all to try which could do the best, Clémentine, and Barbe, and I. Marie gave us an hour, and went to help Madame Hamon with the linen, and Clémentine was very cross; she wanted — I don't know what she wanted, it was always something. So she yawned, and looked out of the window, and hardly did anything. Then she pricked her fingers and was ready to cry, and Barbe, who was so good-tempered, put down her work and went and tied it up, and fetched some water. And, figure to yourself," and Jeannette laid down her own work in her eagerness, "that when Madame Hamon came in, and Grande Barbe, who was slow, had not done her task, Clémentine said not a word. She made her finger an excuse for herself, and would not tell how Barbette had helped her."

"But you?" asked Bell, with deep interest.

"We were not allowed to talk of each other's faults, and Barbe never seemed to mind."

"I should have liked your Marie and your Barbe, I think, but not Clémentine."

"No, I dare say not. Still, I should like even to see Clémentine again. There! Now 'tis really finished. Bell, Bell, is it nice—is it pretty? Say truly, then!"

There could be no doubt about the genuineness of Bell's admiration and wonder. She entered with all her heart into the subject, and long and deep were the children's consultations over the best manner of surprising Madam. Where should the work be put? Laid on her plate at supper-time—dropped into her lap from over her shoulder—folded in innumerable wrappings? They were in the very thick of all these questions when they heard Madam's quick step along the passage, and she came in upon them too radiant and excited to notice the evident perturbation of the children.

"Bell, child," she cried, "here's the best of news for you and me! Will you guess? Nay, I cannot keep it to myself, and so there's an end to trying. But who do you think is coming? • Your mother, and none else! When I untied her dear letter sure I never thought what words would meet me: but 'tis all true, for Sir Martin hath to go up to town, called for by my Lord Treasurer, and your mother having long promised to spend a day or two in Dorsetshire will lie there to-night, and considers she may as well come here herself to fetch you away. We shall ill-spare you, my Bell;

but to think of having her here is more than I had dreamt of!"

Bell's delight was almost as great as Madam's: little Jeanne, looking from one to the other, was thrilled with sympathy, with sorrow, with something she could not explain. She was glad for Bell's sake, but would she not lose her companion? and oh! when would they come for her? And Madam was quick to understand. She sat down and took Jeanne on her knee, and began to talk to her about her sister, and how, though she was a little older than herself, they two had ever been all the world to each other when both were girls at home in their father's house. And now father and mother too were dead, and brothers and sisters dispersed, and Di and she completely separated, and had scarce seen each other for eleven years, when Bell was born. And, she said, Jeanne would guess what joy 'twas for her to think of having her sister there, and showing her her home, and letting her know Mr. Randolph, the best husband she could ever have wished for her wild Bess. And, indeed, she so touched and soothed the little heart that in this thrill of affection for Madam, forgetful of all schemes, forgetful of everything but the longing to prove her love, Jeanne dragged the embroidery out of her pocket and shyly laid it in her lap.

“Why, what pretty fancy is this?” cried Madam, lifting and smoothing it softly.

“‘Tis for you, madam,” whispered Jeanne, colouring. “A cap, if it pleases you.”

“A cap! But what pretty work! and for me? But where does it come from?”

“‘Tis *the* cambric,” said Jeannette, laying her hand against Madam Randolph’s shoulder; “and now you know why I wanted it. ‘Twas to work a cap and to surprise you.”

“Surprise? Surprise indeed! Do you mean you have worked it all yourself?”

“Every bit!” cried Bell, eagerly. “See here, Aunt Bess, are not the little leaves sweet? and the tendrils? And oh, that flower!—we thought ‘twould never be done!”

Madam’s bright eyes were full of tears. This little gift of love was very dear to her.

“Jeannette,” she said, kissing her, “I will make it up this very day, and will wear it when Di comes. And ‘twill always be precious to me for the sake of the little fingers that wrought it.”

She said no more, being never a person of many words, but Jeanne wanted nothing further; and when she saw Madam stitching away at the cap, and heard her singing to herself in the blitheness of her heart for

thought of what was coming, she felt as if she, too, had a share in it, and no grudging feelings troubled her thoughts of their happiness. She fell to counting the days as they did, and there were false alarms and numerous excitements long before it was possible for Lady Dennett to arrive. Madam had even some thoughts of going to Exeter to meet her, but was persuaded out of it by her husband.

So they were watching and longing, and the sweetest season of the year was come. Eastertide had fallen late and was not over, and spring had set in with its kindest nature showing. The Court got a beauty Jeanne had never seen in it before, as the leaves stole out, and the daisies whitened the grass, and all kinds of tender influences seemed at work. And there, where a gap in the hedge commanded the high roads the children would all gather and watch for Lady Dennett's chariot; and Lyd would sigh and wish she were Bell—to walk in the Mall and see the fine ladies with their trains, and their high heels and their lap-dogs, was her ambition. Doll was contemptuous; Jeanne did not know whether or not it might be delightful, her small life having encountered no such experiences; to Bell they came as a matter of course, and she did not think about them one way or the other.

## CHAPTER XIX.

## MY LADY'S CHARIOT.

TOWARDS the end of the seventeenth century, travelling had so greatly increased in speed as to startle and shock the quiet people who had been content to spend rather more than a week in travelling up to London from Exeter. For now the flying coaches had been put on, which, instead of twenty, did their sixty miles a day, aye, even more. The coaches had their six inside passengers, and their team of five or six horses, and it was felt that the very limit of speed had been reached, and, by many, that it was beyond what should be.

One afternoon the Exeter coach, making its way down again towards the west, was a little behind time, and struggling on over a bad bit of ground as well as the steaming horses could pull. It was an odd-looking, box-like conveyance, so long that it seemed as if it could only turn on a broad common, with wings, also like boxes, sticking out at each door-way; and it had for its passengers three men and three women. One of the men was a stout mercer, taking his wife and two daughters to the home from which his wife

had come, and where her father lay ill. Another was a tall, foreign-looking gentleman, who seemed restlessly anxious about their journey, for he was constantly consulting his watch, or putting his head out of the window. His companion was a lad of about sixteen. Both were dressed in a more sober fashion than was the custom of English gentlemen, and they talked in French, to the amazement of the mercer and his family.

"It is strange, Claude," said the elder of the two, "how every mile seems slower than the last, and increases my impatience. The longing for my little Jeanne is worse than when I had no such good hope as carries us now. I could not have lingered another day for the letters, and therefore directed they should be sent to Exeter to meet us. Suppose they are not there? In that case thou must wait and bring them after me, for go on I must. All this time to know nothing! But thy friends had heard she was in good keeping—is it not so?"

"Yes," said Claude, eagerly. "Monsieur, I will do anything—wait, walk, go where you will! I can never feel as if I had not been to blame, and yet, believe me, I did what I thought at the time was for the best. I would have given my life for her!"

"I know it, my good Claude," said Dr. Maury, laying his hand very kindly on the young man's arm. "I

believe thou wast all but doing so. Do not thou think me to be so unjust: it was strange, but a merciful God will clear it up one day. And, see here. As well might I be blamed by thy father and mother because your dear Marie was taken away while she was in my charge, as thou by me because thou couldst not keep a hold on Jeanne."

"They knew what you had gone through for them, monsieur," said Claude respectfully.

"And I know too—or can guess. Shalt thou join them in Amsterdam, or wait for the hope of their coming to England?"

"Wait, as I think, monsieur. I have found employment in London, and they write as if they had a mind to cross over. Only Barbette left!"

"Barbe will grow into another Marie," said Dr. Maury, warmly. "Unselfishness has been the best teacher of thoughtfulness; and she showed the bravest endurance—never a murmur, never a word of complaint! And we had months of suffering enough to daunt the stoutest heart. I had thought when we left the chateau that there would be no great difficulty in making our way into Switzerland; I did not realize how the Jesuits had laid their toils. The country on the frontier was so closely watched that it was almost impossible to escape; it would have been altogether impossible if

we had not had the best of guides in the François of whom I told you ; he is with me now in London, having joined the religion. We were forced constantly to change our disguises, often to retreat when we thought we had carried our purpose ; and in the mountains the snow fell so heavily that it added tenfold to our misery. It was then I saw of what stuff Barbe was made."

" But at last you reached Geneva ? "

" At last. To find my sharpest pang in thy letter, my Claude. Do not let us talk of it—it is past ; I pray God it is past. We travelled round by Germany and got finally to Amsterdam. And then I came at once to meet thee. Even without this rumour sent by thy friend, I should have gone down to the coast."

" Mercy on us !" whispered the mercer's wife. " How fast they jabber, in a strange tongue and all ! 'Tis a marvel to me how they do it ! "

" 'Tis a greater marvel why the coach sways so, to my thinking," grunted her husband. "'Twill be a mercy if we be not bogged."

It seemed as if his fear were likely to come true, for at this moment the coach pulled up, the guard clambered down, and the mercer, who had clapped his hand on a great horse-pistol he carried, drew in his head from the window, and removed his hand.

" 'Tis nothing but a private chariot stuck in the mire

somehow," he announced, and made room for his womankind to have their peep.

Dr. Maury and Claude, having come to the same conclusion, opened the coach door, and sprang out to see if they could be of service. A pretty-looking lady, pale with fright, was imploring the guard to do something, to which that worthy shook his head.

"Very sorry, my lady, but neither Tom the coachman, nor I, could dare stop his majesty's mails. As for highwaymen, I haven't heard of none about here lately."

"But is there no one you could leave? They tell me 'twill take an hour or two to repair the wheels, and it will be dark before we reach the next stage."

The guard, instead of shaking his head, scratched it, but did not look more hopeful.

"There ain't nobody, my lady, outside, that would be more good than a chicken, and inside there's two mounseers."

"Can we assist you, madame?" said Dr. Maury, stepping forward and removing his hat.

The lady immediately answered in French:

"Ah, sir, if I could venture to implore you to show the greatest charity! I have no one with me but my woman, and the little black serving-boy; and now that this misfortune has overtaken us on the loneliest part

of the road, I am frightened out of my wits. But how can I ask you to stay and protect us? And yet——”

Dr. Maury looked at Claude. In his state of anxiety such a demand was the hardest that could have been put upon him, so hard that it seemed impossible. Yet it was equally impossible to leave a lady in this distress. The guard was growing impatient, the coach could not delay; a countryman had gone to find a wheelwright, and had not yet returned.

“Well, gentlemen, if you like to stop, we'll drop your baggage at the Ram's Head, and you can go on by the express to-morrow morning.”

Dr. Maury, who did not half understand, begged Claude to ask the guard to find out whether the other gentleman could by no means stay, a proposition rejected with the utmost decision by the worthy mercer, to whom the idea of being called upon to act as a protector in case of highwaymen was the most distasteful that could be imagined. There was no help for it. With a feeling almost of despair, Dr. Maury, to whom the minutes had appeared like hours throughout the day, watched the flying coach roll away over the heavy roads, and felt himself condemned to the tediousness of a weary waiting.

The lady's gratitude was, it must be said, extreme. She begged the two gentlemen at once to get into the

chariot, and thanked them very sweetly for their aid. She was a poor creature, she said, as to stoutness of heart, and should not have adventured herself in this manner, had she properly considered the risk. And it seemed, moreover, that her woman, being of a still more tremulous nature, had entertained her with so many stories of highwaymen, and accounts of their executions, that she was ready to see a black wizard in every shadow. She spoke so pleasantly and prettily that Claude was charmed, and Dr. Maury might have been so had he been less pre-occupied, which she did not perhaps perceive, being much taken up with her own case. He fell a thinking, as she talked on, what this fine rose-leaf lady would have done had she been put to the straits which some of his countrywomen, as delicate and softly nurtured, had forced upon them for their religion. Geneva, Amsterdam, London, were full of these stories, and the Huguenot women had often put strong men to shame. To one who had come out from such a furnace, it was difficult to find much sympathy for a fine lady in her coach, terrified by stories of highwaymen; and 'twas no wonder he listened listlessly.

The wheelwright came at last, a slow and stolid man, so slow and stolid that though Dr. Maury sprang out of the carriage, and by Claude's help tried to

impress speed upon him, he soon found the attempt was useless. In his anxiety he had thought it possible that when they had escorted the lady to the stage where she intended to stop the night, he and Claude might get horses and push on to the further point where the coach rested; but he began to feel it was a useless hope, and that he must content himself with the guard's suggestion.

At last, however, things were set to rights, and my lady fairly pacified by the man's ignorance of any highwaymen being on the road—although, as she said, to be sure it might be a blind, and he an accomplice. So the two gentlemen got in, the black boy clambered on his perch, and away rolled the chariot once more on its way.

“ ‘Tis inconveniencing you sadly, I fear,” said the lady in her gentle voice; “but, indeed, sir, I cannot but be thankful, for I should have died of fright if I had been forced to travel at this late hour without protection. Were you going as far as Exeter? Many of your countrymen have, I know, found refuge there.”

“ Yes, madame,” answered Dr. Maury, “ but I have a farther distance before me of some five and twenty miles towards the coast.”

“ I have precisely the same journey in view, and you must suffer me to convey you,” she said, smiling.

“What, will you not ?” she added, as he shook his head.

“Pardon me, madame, but my impatience will oblige me to travel more rapidly. I have an end in view which allows of no delay.”

“And I am causing it now !” she said, in real distress. “It is perhaps illness ?”

“No, madame, but I believed I had lost my child, who was cast away on these shores many months ago, and now I have had tidings which make me hope she may yet be alive.”

The lady looked from one to the other with an eager smile dawning in her eyes. Then she clasped her hands and leant forward towards the lad.

“Sure,” she said, “you must be M. Claude Hamon ?”

“That is my name, madame,” said Claude, greatly surprised.

“And it is little Jeanne—Jeannette Maury—whom you seek ?”

“Jeannette ! Do you know her, madame ? Can you tell me ? May Heaven bless you if you can tell me !”

It was Dr. Maury who cried out these words, with a passionate yearning at which Lady Dennett’s kind eyes filled with tears.

“Oh, comfort yourself, monsieur !” she cried. “Indeed

she is well, and well cared for, for she is at my sister's house, and it is there that I am travelling. Nay, sir, nay," she went on, smiling and crying, for he was down on his knees, kissing her hands over and over again, like one who could find no words, "it is not me you have to thank for anything, but your own charity for my silly fears. And, indeed, I don't think I ever had such a happy moment in my life! To think of her being your child! Why, my Bell is there, and the two are like sisters, and——but, indeed, 'tis all the strangest thing!"

"Oh! madame, if you only knew what bliss you have brought me!—and my Claude, too," he added, pointing to the lad. "For all this while she hath been lost to us, and now—to hear sure news! Oh, madame, what a blessed Providence led us to you—and I had been chafing at the delay!"

"I think I am almost as happy as you are, monsieur," said Lady Dennett, smiling; and, indeed, she was greatly interested and touched, so much so as to forget her fears, though it grew quite dark, and the long desolate road before they reached the Ram's Head was the very place for highwaymen. But Dr. Maury had a hundred questions to ask, and what with those she could answer and those she could not, and what she had heard of Jeannette from her sister Randolph, and

from Bell, and what Mallaton was like, and in how short a time it might be reached—the hours slipped by, and they had rattled into the court of the inn before they expected it; and there was the great sign creaking as they passed under, and lights carried round the wooden gallery, and mine host hurrying out to welcome the new-comers. Lady Dennett was tired and went to her room at once, but Dr. Maury and Claude sat late in the great kitchen, talking of all they had learnt. Dr. Maury had resolved to do as Lady Dennett begged him, travel with her, by which means they would lie the next night at Exeter, and reach Mallaton on the following evening. And though he might get a letter there before himself, he determined against it. The joy of surprise was one he saw no need for giving up; and as he pictured Jeannette's face, her cry of delight, her spring into his arms, he covered his face with his hands, and from the very bottom of his heart there went up his praise to the Great Father who had given back his child.

It cost Lady Dennett more than Dr. Maury ever knew to travel at the speed he wished. Her easy good-humour, which led her to indulge herself as well as everybody else, would have taken her slowly and comfortably along, and not even the thought of her child and her sister at the end of her journey would have in the smallest degree quickened her movements. But

she could not resist Dr. Maury's energy. He bribed the postboys, hurried the ostlers, and implored Lady Dennett with a look in his eyes which she found it impossible to withstand. And so on the afternoon of the second day, having left Exeter early, they had passed over the high moorland, and dipped into pretty valleys, and climbed such hills, and jolted along such roads as only Devonshire could show, and were turning off into a tangle of by-lanes, which in course of time, and supposing the springs held together, would bring them to Mallaton.

It was just at that moment that Madam, who had wasted the greater part of the day in looking out of window, though she knew it was impossible her sister could have arrived by this time, turned away and said to her husband, with a sigh,—

“Harrington, I am quite weary of waiting.”

“I should not wonder, sweetheart. ‘Tis what you weary of soonest.”

“And you laugh at me! Fie upon you! I shall go and seek Bell, and yet—I do not know—Bell has too much of her mother's sweet placidity to enter into my impatience. Now Jeannette has more of it in her. If Jeannette were expecting anybody she would be all on wires. Alas, poor little soul, will that day ever come, I wonder? I most despair for her.”

“Certainly 'twill be a strange bringing together again.”

“And I could 'beat myself when I think how I should begrudge her to her own.”

“You and Peter Drake ?”

“Yes, sir; Peter Drake and I. And you, too, as I verily believe, for all your taunts.”

“Well, well, a woman must have her word. But if you can spare the time from your window, there's a rent in my cassock crying to be mended.”

It was a large hole, and it took Madam a long while. Bell and Jeannette came racing in, with rosy faces, and bunches of hedge flowers, and breathless stories of what they had seen in the lanes. And 'twas just at this moment that Madam gave a cry and dropped her work in a black heap on the ground.

“Oh, Bell !” she exclaimed, “I hear wheels !”

They were all out of the gate in a moment. The great yellow chariot came swaying and swinging along, the postboys drove up with a flourish. Madam, stretching out her arms for joy at sight of her Di, drew back in amazement to see two strange gentlemen's faces behind Lady Dennett; the door was opened, a gentleman sprang out, just lifting his hat, and Jeannette, speechless at that first glance, had recovered her voice, and, clasped in his arms, was crying out, “*Mon père, mon père, mon père !*”



"A gentleman sprang out, just lifting his hat, and Jeannette cried out, 'Mon père, mon père, mon père!'”—Page 304.



"Yes, my Bess," cried Lady Dennett, stepping down, with a face quite flushed with delight, and hugging her child and her sister; "is it not the most delightful hap that could have been dreamt of? Here I met with these gentlemen on the road, and was able to direct them just where they should find her. And though I have been whirled along till there is scarce any breath left in my body, this moment pays for all."

Dr. Maury, with Jeannette clinging to his neck, and one of her hands clasping Claude's, came up to Madam and kissed her hand.

"What can I say, madame?" he said in a broken voice, and the tears were running down his cheeks. "Only God can ever reward and bless you! You have been a mother to my child."

Quite a crowd had gathered round; the people had run out to see the great chariot and Madam's fine visitors, and were pressing up in wonder. It was best to go into the house, and there, with Jeannette in a silent rapture of delight, insisting upon holding fast by both her father and Claude, to hear something of what had to be told on both sides. Perhaps Lady Dennett was the chief speaker. She was in high spirits over quite a new sensation, for living in general a very passive life, with everything made easy for her without exertion on her part, it really was a new sensation to

have carried anything to a successful ending without Sir Martin. Perhaps her part had not been very active even here, but she felt as if a good deal had been done, and was stirred into triumph. Bell, too, was perfectly happy, and they all acknowledged Jeannette's infinite contentment to be a pretty sight, as she lay resting her head against her father's heart. By and by, when the rush of words had passed, and the others were talking, he began to whisper to her.

"I never thought to see thee again, at one time, my Jeanne, my treasure!"

"But the Good Shepherd kept me, *mon père*. I was sure He would. Now tell me about Marie, and Clémentine, and Grande Barbe. Will they come?"

He hesitated. Not at this moment could he bear to damp her joy. He said, slowly—

"I will tell thee about dear Marie to-morrow. Barbe is with her father and mother, and we think they will come some day. But here is Claude."

"Yes, yes," cried Jeanne, stretching out another hand to him. "Claude who took care of me."

"But tell me, *petite*, how was it? How did I lose thee that day? How didst thou come here?"

"Oh, I don't know!" said Jeanne, laughing gaily. "Thou must ask Peter Drake about that."

It seemed as if the talk, the explanations, would

never end. How Claude's friends, hearing something of the inquiries made by Lady Dennett at Bath after their departure, had sent him word, and Dr. Maury—who had just arrived in England—catching at it, they had set out at once, without waiting for further letters, which were to meet them in Exeter, but were not there. The meeting with Lady Dennett had thus saved them much vexatious delay, and she was very triumphant over her part in the matter, and sure that 'twould astonish Sir Martin beyond words. Madam's hospitality was equal to the strain upon it, except that the parsonage could not supply so many beds, and Parson Randolph himself sallied out to get a room for the two gentlemen at a neighbouring farm.

"Though 'tis but rough quarters, I fear," he said, on his return.

"A palace most likely, monsieur, to what I have used of late," said Dr. Maury, smiling, when he understood. "And here we can breathe, we can pray, we can praise our God. Ah! you are happy, you, in this free country, where you have no fears of soldiers breaking in upon your homes, or your children being snatched from you."

"May Heaven forbid!" said Lady Dennett, pressing her Bell to her side.

Heaven forbid, indeed, that such deeds be done again

in the name of religion as darkened fair France for many a long year after these words were spoken, so that even sixty years later, in the course of two years, at Grenoble only, more than three hundred persons were condemned to death, the galleys, or perpetual imprisonment, on account of their religion. And, alas, what sadness, what divisions were caused in families! Of those she had left behind, two Madame Hamon saw no more; Clémentine remained at Caen, deaf to all her mother's entreaties that she would come to her; happier Marie rested under the chestnut-trees of Burgundy. Do you think the mother's heart ever ceased to ache? Do you think that we should forget how people have suffered and died for their belief? No; it is good to remember, to keep their examples in our hearts, to learn from them how indeed it would profit a man nothing to gain the whole world and lose his own soul.

And those who had gone through the trial came out of it better and braver. Even the little children, who had but to obey, gained the blessings of the obedient. Jeannette, growing up by her father's side, was gentler, kinder, more patient, than she might have been had she lived the old life. Dr. Maury practised in London, Claude had his home at their house; and even when Monsieur and Madame Hamon, with Barbe, now grown tall and comely, and little Priscille, who had Marie's

eyes and Marie's voice, came to England, they did not remain in London, as the pastor became minister to the French refugees at Canterbury. Claude, therefore, continued with the Maurys.

One night, many years afterwards, the three were sitting round the fire on a winter's night, and Claude and Jeanne were setting chestnuts to roast, Dr. Maury watching them with a little amusement. He said presently—

“So you saw your friend Bell—my Lady Moreton that is?”

“Yes, *mon père*,” said Jeannette, “as brave as could be, in all her beautiful diamonds, dressed for the ball. But it is no difference where she is going or in what she is dressed, for she is always the prettiest and the dearest Bell! And Madam was there too, come up to remain before they move to his new cure near Oxford. Now she says she shall often see us.”

“And what news does she bring?”

“Peter Drake goes to church every Sunday in the new suit we sent him, and stops in the porch full five minutes to admire himself. Lyd Harewood is married, but they fear not happily; and since Mrs. Harewood's death Doll keeps house for her father.”

Dr. Maury heaved a mock sigh.

“It is nothing but marrying on every side, I declare!

Why cannot people be content to go on quietly without all this to-do?"

"Ah, monsieur—" broke in Claude with great eagerness. But Dr. Maury stopped him, putting up his hand and saying, with a shrug and a look of comic despair—

"Oh, my friend, say nothing; I know all about it. And as for Jeannette, do you remember what her old cry used to be?—'I want Claude.' Now if you both want one another, what can I do against it?"

THE END.



